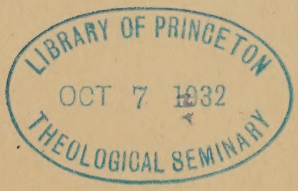

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The Dilemma of Protestantism

THE DILEMMA OF PROTESTANTISM

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BY

WILLIAM E. HAMMOND

Author of

"A Permanent Faith: A New Approach"

Harper & Brothers Publishers

NEW YORK AND LONDON

1929

THE DILEMMA OF PROTESTANTISM
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FIRST EDITION
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TO

DR. CLARENCE A. BECKWITH

TO WHOSE FRIENDSHIP

INSTRUCTION AND ENCOURAGEMENT

I OWE MUCH

Foreword

IN A recent volume, entitled *Religious Thought in the Last Quarter Century,* one of the essays on "The Interpretation of Protestantism," by Professor J. T. McNeill, gives a résumé of the numerous attempts made during recent years to trace the contributing streams which merged at, and resulted in, the Reformation, to determine the essential principles of the Protestant faith, and to follow the trend and to appraise the effect of these principles on our Western civilization during these intervening centuries. A formidable array of authorities is cited.

The painstaking researches of scholarship and its several analyses of the data under treatment leave the man in the actual work of the Christian ministry with a feeling that much still remains to be accounted for, which the keen scrutiny and historic sense of the classroom have overlooked or ignored. Even the city pastor, drawing his congregation from a wide area and disposed to take it for granted that those of his neighbors who do not share his religious persuasion are loyal to the churches of their choice, may not sense the situation as it really is. But the Protestant clergymen of the smaller communities, where the habits and conduct of every Protestant of the parish are under their daily

observation, have no illusions. They are only too painfully aware of the fact that from one-third to one-half of those who profess allegiance to the Protestant faith manifest no interest in organized religion, whereas a similar percentage of those interested attend public worship with no degree of regularity nor make any worthy contribution to the church's life. This indifference is all the more pronounced because of the contrast afforded by Catholic loyalty.

In view of these facts, it is not surprising that Protestant clergymen in the smaller communities do not share the optimism of certain denominational secretaries and editors who acclaim the encouraging growth, healthy condition, and rosy outlook of the Protestant church. Recent statements about the alarming losses of members in Protestant churches certainly do not sustain the reassuring verdicts of ecclesiastical officialism. Whatever may be said on the subject, existing conditions and certain obvious trends are far from inspiring.

The task of criticism is not pleasant, but nothing is gained by closing our eyes to defects and failures. The Apostle Paul refers to "speaking truth in love" as an indispensable condition of making genuine progress. It is in this spirit that I have undertaken to analyze certain phases of modern American Protestantism. If the earlier chapters sound somewhat harshly critical let the reader be patient and

accompany me to the end, for my ultimate aim is constructive. It is my hope that this volume may in some measure contribute to the renaissance of American Protestantism, of which already there are encouraging signs.

I am indebted to *The Journal of Religion* and *The Biblical World* for permission to quote from my articles which were published in these periodicals.

W. E. H.

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The Dilemma of Protestantism

Chapter One

AFTER FOUR CENTURIES OF PROTESTANTISM

THE genesis and genius of Protestantism are compressed into three succinctly expressed principles: the Bible as a rule of faith, the right of private judgment, and justification by faith. These were made the rallying-cry of the Protestant Reformation, and they have also been the bed-rock principles that have unquestionably determined and preserved the character and characteristics of the Protestant church. Our purpose is to ascertain whether the church's emphasis of these principles, as essentially vital and fundamental to its well-being and preservation, is vindicated by modern American Protestantism; whether they are sufficiently potent to preserve Protestantism for future generations; or whether the superstructure of future Protestantism must rest on other foundations.

I

The Reformation was primarily a revolt against ecclesiastical domination. Through a number of centuries Catholicism had steadily developed an ec-

clesiastical system, the power of which was centralized in a small hierarchy with the pope at its head. By the sixteenth century it had so far strengthened its position that it was accepted as the sole arbiter of questions of religious doctrines and discipline. It reserved for itself the privilege to dispense or to withhold salvation, which was a monopoly solely in its custody. It was thus in a position to dictate the conditions under which men could enter its fellowship and remain participants of its privileges. Its prerogatives rested on the assumption that Jesus had founded the church and had entrusted to it authority to speak in His name and to act in His place. Recognizing His presence in the church in a peculiar and unique sense, it claimed the right of unquestioned authority as the sole representative of Christ on earth. This prerogative could not logically be claimed for the Bible, seeing the Bible was the product of the church. The argument resolved itself, however, into a circle of reasoning which raised more questions than it answered. Granted the church preceded the Bible in point of time, and that it received its authority directly from Jesus, the New Testament was the divinely inspired utterance of the church, or the injunctions of the Holy Spirit speaking through the church. As such it must be accepted as authoritative. Should conflict be found to exist between the teachings of Scripture as the imperious utterances of the church and the church's

later demands, the fallibility of the church's authority would stand self-exposed—an exposure which would shatter the premise of infallibility.

But who should decide whether the church's later codified discipline contradicted its former divinely inspired pronouncements as recorded and preserved in the New Testament? Naturally, the church claimed the exclusive right to pass judgment on the issue. As sole arbiter it was in a position to give its own interpretation of Scripture, as, at once, final and binding. This privilege and power the leaders of the Reformation were not willing, however, to concede. Suspicious that many of the exactions of the church were contrary to the teachings of Scripture, they determined to satisfy themselves by a personal study of the New Testament whether or not it was overstepping the bounds of its prerogatives. The result of their investigations is a matter of history. Having turned to the New Testament and satisfied themselves that many pontifical rulings, if not contrary to, were at least unwarranted by, its teachings, the leaders of the Reformation demanded the right of Christians to test their private conduct and the decrees of the church by the inspired revelation of God's will to men as recorded in the Scriptures. The Reformers abolished utterly any belief in the infallibility of ecclesiastical authority in interpretation. The rallying-cry was heard throughout north-

ern Europe, "Back to the Bible as the sole rule of faith and final authority for Christian conduct."

In the very nature of the protest, the necessity was laid upon Protestantism to prove from Scripture that many of the church's disciplinarian and creedal requirements had no valid foundation. This involved not merely a working knowledge of the Bible but an interpretation of many passages contrary to that given by Catholicism. The leaders of the Reformation thus undertook to prove from Scripture that Catholicism was wrong and to justify their separation from the Mother Church. The exposition of Scripture therefore became both inevitable and central in the new Protestant movement. Nor has the emphasis changed with the passing of these centuries. To what lengths certain tendencies of the hour will be carried, to give precedence to ritual in worship, and to re-establish the Mass as its pivotal factor, remains for the future to disclose. Until now, however, preaching, based on Scripture, has continued to occupy a central place in Protestantism.

Having at first no further end in view than to disprove the claims of Rome, Protestant leaders soon found themselves at variance with each other. They agreed that certain Catholic claims and injunctions were both unessential and unwarranted, but the difficulty arose of deciding what was essential to salvation. Scripture was evidently not so clear and definite at this point as might have been

hoped. Considerable disagreement arose over the question of fundamentals. Not only was it difficult to decide what was positively indispensable to salvation but unanimity could not be reached regarding the teaching of Scripture on matters of church organization and government and the manner in which certain rites should be administered. Moreover, time was to prove no aid in the mastery of these difficulties. As a fact of history, where greater attention was given to the Bible as the rule of faith, the more numerous were the disagreements. This chief emphasis of Protestantism was thus destined to result in an ever increasing growth of sectarian movements.

With the rise of sectarianism the modern seminary became an inevitable necessity. The need was felt that the essential beliefs of the sect should be disseminated. For this purpose men must be grounded in the doctrines of the denomination and well equipped as apologists for the particular brand of sectarianism which they had undertaken to propagate. This made possible a class of theological professors whose business it was to investigate Scripture in the interest of their own creeds, if not to the disparagement of all other interpretations. Nor did the specialized work of this particular group of investigators prove wholly futile. On the contrary, the new impetus given to Biblical research proved to be far-reaching in its influence and results. Out

of textual criticism grew a number of related studies. Questions of historicity, authorship, symbolism, ethical values and religious conceptions, were among the numerous interests inspired by the Protestant emphasis on the Bible as the rule of faith.

The field of inquiry was still further widened by the advent of archæology and comparative religion. The unearthing of ancient tablets and papyri not only served to throw considerable light on many of the customs and beliefs of the early Jews as recorded in the Old Testament, but revealed the influence of non-Jewish thought on the writers of the Bible. In similar manner, missionaries returned from distant lands with first-hand knowledge of other great religions and a fund of information relating to the numerous tribal faiths of the uncivilized world. In many instances they brought back with them Sacred Writings which confirmed the information they had to impart. Such smatterings of knowledge as they communicated served to stimulate curiosity and to impel more thorough investigation. Nor were the disclosures of these studies wholly reassuring. It was discovered, among other things, how numerous are the similarities between the practices and beliefs of primitive people, often, geographically, far apart. The comparative method served to throw no little light on the religious customs and thinking of the Palestinian Jews of Old Testament times. Nor was confidence in its uniqueness strengthened by the

discovery that the Bible did not have a monopoly on the world's ethical teaching and spiritual principles. Indeed, serious doubts were entertained in certain quarters regarding the originality of the finest that the Bible has to offer. Even more serious were the misgivings aroused regarding the historicity of many Biblical incidents, in the light of similar beliefs generally held by primitive people. Once more it was found necessary to widen the range of investigation when science questioned the age of the race and its method of creation. As will be seen later, the effect of the theory of evolution on a number of long-established related religious conceptions, which had their basis in the historicity of the first three chapters of Genesis, has been little short of devastating.

The present writer has dealt elsewhere [1] with the two distinct, and diametrically opposed, views held by modern Protestants regarding the significance, use and authority of the Bible. All that need be noted at this point is the fact that the age-long tragedy and comedy of human conduct and beliefs, warranted by Scripture, has by no means ceased. The Christian world is still far from reaching agreement with respect to the teachings of the Bible. Sects and cults continue to thrive on specific interpretations. There are today almost as many interpretations given to Scripture as there are Protestant

[1] A Permanent faith: A new Approach. C. IV.

clergymen. One needs only to "listen in" to the sermons broadcast to realize how conflicting are the utterances of the church's acknowledged leaders. All this has made for confusion, except in the case of those who have learned to adjust their thinking to the facts of scholarship and science. On the other hand, the effect has been to discredit the whole authority of the Bible. This refers to those who are content to accept the negative results of scholarship without any attempt to acquaint themselves with the new appraisals held by those who, while thoroughly versed in the findings of recent research, continue to rely on its teachings for inspiration and guidance. In short, the fundamental demand for a recognition of the Bible as the Christian's sole rule of faith has led to a disavowal of its authority on the part of no small proportion of the Protestant American public.

II

When Henry VIII severed his connection with Rome, to all appearances the church of his realm remained as it was previous to the Reformation. All that happened was for Henry to declare himself head of the Church of England, occupying the same position and exercising the same authority as the pope had formerly held and exercised. By

way of parenthesis it may be stated that while much has been said regarding Henry VIII's selfish motive for severing his relations with Rome, his action was possible only because the majority of his clergy and nobles were ready for the change. This is evidenced by the negative fact that no serious insurrection or revolution resulted from Henry's radical action; and by the positive fact that many of his subjects were much displeased that he had not gone farther in the direction of the Reformation. The rallying-cry of Continental Protestantism, with its three great fundamental principles and demands, had been heard in England, eliciting a ready and widespread response. But in the face of this appealing challenge Roman priests, who had renounced their allegiance to the pope and had sworn allegiance to Henry VIII as head of the Church of England, continued in office, performing the same rituals and making the same exactions of their parishioners as they had previously done. The outward changes were so slight that many felt the primary purpose of the Reformation was being thwarted. Consequently, we have the appearance in England of the two great historic parties—the Puritans and the Separatists—who were destined to play such an important rôle in American history. The second fundamental principle of the Reformation is now being stressed by British Prot-

estantism. It is the right of private judgment, that is, the right to worship God in accordance with one's personal religious convictions.

This principle of private judgment was originally enunciated as a safeguard to the sanctity of conscience in the regulation of personal religious exercises and beliefs. But it could not long be kept within those confines where it was undoubtedly intended solely to be applied. It would be difficult to say to what extent this principle has influenced and determined the history of Western civilization during these intervening centuries. There would be differences of opinion whether it is responsible, in whole or in part, for the present economic order, with its insistence on the freest exercise of the principles of laissez-faire and the right of free contract; for the sensitizing of national consciousness, finding, at length, expression in modern nationalism; for the urge that has found vent in modern imperialism. The ramifications and effects of the application of the principle are doubtless more numerous than would be conceded even by Weber and his followers, who maintain that Calvinism, in its English version, was the parent of capitalism. On the other hand, among those accepting Tawney's dictum that "the strands in this movement were complex, and the formula which associates the Reformation with the rise of economic individualism is

no complete explanation," [2] would be found some who would maintain that the tremendous impetus given to individualism and personal liberty by the Reformation was by no means the least important strand in the evolutionary trend responsible for the existing economic order.

In this connection the story of American colonial days provides an interesting commentary. The Pilgrim Fathers had sacrificed much, and suffered much, for the right of the free exercise of private judgment. As long as the pope remained the recognized head of the church, the struggle was strictly an ecclesiastical one, in the sense that it always involved the prerogative of papal authority. But once Henry VIII had declared himself head of the Church of England the conflict passed into the political arena. The struggle for religious liberty had now become inextricably related to state politics and the prerogatives of reigning rulers. It was the state that the Puritans and Separatists defied, and by the state that they were persecuted and exiled. Nor did the political phase of the struggle pass with the migration of the Pilgrims. Once established on New England shores, the conflict between the state and the individual or small minorities, proved as intense as ever. The deplorable intolerance of majorities was again in evidence, seeking to crush by

[2] Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism,* pp. 65, 83-85, 212.

persecution and exile those opposed to its will. And it was by the church's manipulation of political power that the prerogative of the state was applied to the ruthless suppression of heretics and nonconformists.

The struggle having once passed beyond strictly ecclesiastical confines into the political arena, the principle of the right of private judgment was destined to influence yet other relationships and activities. Material advantage was a minor consideration with the Pilgrim Fathers. Had they not sacrificed all for Protestant principles? That first Thanksgiving, with their ranks seriously depleted, and confronted by the perils of Indian raids and indications of a severe winter, was not an occasion for jubilance because of the material abundance at their disposal. Renunciation of their principles would have made possible their return to England with its restoration to former comforts and possessions. That first Thanksgiving was an occasion for gratitude because of the prospects their new location afforded them for the expression of their religious convictions. Nevertheless, the time was not far distant when the keenest interest would be taken in matters of economic advantages and disqualifications. The right of self-determintion was to be applied to economic conditions as well as to the regulation of governmental policies and the

exercise of governmental power. Commercial privileges and restrictions were to be questioned and eventually settled by the arbitrament of war. Within two centuries of the landing of the *Mayflower,* the principle of private judgment, as authoritative in matters of religious conviction and worship, had found expression in the right of liberty to shape economic conditions and in the claim to national self-determination. The revolution was fought on the issue of political and commercial freedom: freedom to trade and govern according to private judgment, independent of external domination, even as their fathers had done in matters of religious beliefs and action.

The more obvious effect of the application of the principle is evidenced in that trend which has made for religious irresponsibility and moral laxity. Originally applied to religious thinking and conduct, and later to political and economic affairs, it was equally inevitable that sooner or later it would be applied to the more general phases of personal behavior. Restricted at first to the regulation of Christian convictions in matters of worship, practice, and beliefs, men eventually came to claim the right of private judgment to reject all religious beliefs and to abandon religious practices and customs. It was no longer a question of liberty to worship God in accordance with one's personal religious convictions.

It became the basis of liberty to discontinue worship, to discard religious beliefs and to discountenance established religious standards and conventions. Protestantism had truly gained freedom with a vengeance. Every man was now a law unto himself. He was no longer under the control of priest, king, or church. As to the Bible, failure to arrive at any agreement respecting its teachings had deprived it, in the opinion of many, of any binding authority. Consequently, the only authority a Protestant need recognize is the authority of his own private judgment, conscience, or conviction. Who can stand the test of liberty: freedom to act without fear of molestation or condemnation? The tendency under such conditions is to go the way of least resistance. This is how a goodly number of Protestants have been traveling, although some do not follow the path of unscrupulous irresponsibility.

Were the heritage of liberty universally utilized to personal ends, the doors of America's numerous Protestant churches would be closed. The fact that they are open testifies to the splendid loyalty of hosts of devoted souls. The church is still able to command genuine sacrifice and unstinted service. Fully cognizant of the fact that no liberty can be long enjoyed when its correlated responsibilities are shirked, these consecrated sons of the church are giving full measure of devotion to the service of

God and their fellow men. There would be scant cause for uneasiness were all professing Protestants equally as sensitive to the necessity of preserving the heritage of liberty procured for them at great cost, and as ready to shoulder their legitimate share of obligations which the preservation of existing freedom involves. Unfortunately, such is not the case.

One disturbing phase of the present situation is the numerical growth of those who show a minimum of concern for the future of organized religion. Every community possesses families whose tradition for several generations is one of Sunday observance and regular attendance at public worship. Their children manifest little, if any, interest in the church, nor do they have any compunction about indulging in Sunday sports and amusements, which less than a century ago would have been sufficient to have ostracized them. Protestantism's claim to the right of private judgment has made possible the ignoring of many vital religious responsibilities, the transformation of Sunday into a day of self-indulgence, and an utter indifference to the fate of the movement which is almost wholly responsible for the freedom they enjoy. The right of private judgment, procured at stupendous sacrifice and suffering, has for hosts of Protestants so far lost its original moral and spiritual content as to provide sanction for all manner of unsocial con-

duct, irresponsibility, and unbridled license, much to the danger of civilization.

III

"Justification by faith." The phrase sounds quaint, foreign, ancient. And yet perhaps no principle for which the Reformation was fought has been more grossly misappropriated and more vigorously applied by a certain type of modern Protestant to the regulation of their conduct. Justification by faith implies that every man may be his own priest; that salvation is not the reward of practices demanded and imposed by ecclesiastics, nor that it is the special gift of the church. It is a man's inner religious faith motivating his actions that justifies him in the sight of God. The Reformation protested against the church's claim that there is no salvation outside of its communion, and its prerogative to determine the conditions under which men must enter and remain in its fellowship. Justification by faith, as opposed to Sacramental Grace, insists that man can bring his life to a higher level by the personal application of a discipline that results from faith in Jesus and fellowship with him. Protestantism has taught that the mediation of priests is unnecessary and can, without loss, be dispensed with in man's approach to God. The result is that religion for this age is becoming in-

creasingly a private affair. The opinion has gained wide acceptance that a person does not need to attend church to be a Christian; he can be just as religious outside of the church.

The insistence on education has been one of the most important contributions of Protestantism to the life of the nation. One of the first undertakings of the Reformation was to translate the Bible into the language of the people. Several considerations favored this course. If the Bible was to be made the rule of faith, it was necessary that the masses should have access to its contents. Moreover, the leaders of the new movement knew that if their own appeal to Scripture was to carry weight, it must be made to people who not only possess the Bible in their own language but are qualified to read it. There was also a general feeling that the autocracy of Rome had been possible only because of the ignorance of the great masses. The same need of an educated public was felt in the conflict with the ecclesiastical autocracy of the Church of England during those stormy days immediately following England's severance from Rome. It is not surprising, therefore, to find the Pilgrim Fathers insisting on education as vital to the well-being and freedom of the new commonwealth. Not the least of the "survival values" of the great heritage bequeathed by the Pilgrim Fathers to succeeding generations is the impetus they gave to education and

the high estimate they placed upon it. The importance attached to education was evidenced by the part played by the country schoolhouse in pioneer life, and the sacrifices made by the pioneers in the interests of higher education. The story of the American college, during at least the early stages of its history, is a cherished memory. It also testifies to a significant contribution which Protestantism has made to the nation's life and cultural development. For, invariably, it was the Christian leaders of the new states who laid the foundations for their existing educational institutions.

As a natural corollary of this threefold emphasis —the Bible the Christian's rule of faith, education, and exposition of Scripture as central in worship— men began to acquire an independence of thought which not only grew more fearless and assertive with the passing of time, but was destined to exercise an increasing influence on American Protestantism. A desire for knowledge, once thoroughly aroused, is not always easily satisfied. Moreover, with each fresh extension of the boundaries of knowledge the mind is confronted by new, and more numerous, interrogations. It is stimulated to further investigation, so that research makes for continuous discoveries and disclosures which have often called for the modification, if not the complete displacement, of previous opinion. Nor have the conclusions reached by the light of newly ac-

quired facts always met with ready and universal acceptance. The freedom of thought, quickened by research, has as often made for difference as for unanimity of opinion. Such condition should have proved a great benefit to human advancement, but it has met with serious opposition from those influenced by established thought. One of the strange paradoxes of the Protestant movement is that while it has manifested an acute fear of ecclesiastical autocracy, appealing to an open Bible as the Christian's rule of faith, and encouraging education with its corollary of freedom of thought, it has not always welcomed the evidence and arguments of those devoted to unbiased investigation and to a disinterested quest for truth.

Without recalling the theological controversies and acrimonious conflicts of the past, two regrettable conditions may be cited as illustrative of the doubtful effects of the opposition of the church of an earlier day to truths and opinions held incompatible with its own doctrines. In the first place, Protestantism is today confronted by a deplorable number of sects which militate against its efficiency and effectiveness. In the absence of an adequate knowledge of the historic conditions and convictions responsible for their existence, and their present distinctive beliefs, practices, or features of organization, these numerous sects create the impression of bewilderment, if not of absurdity. This

is produced apart from the inevitable weakness due to overorganization, the dissociation of numerous units, the expense involved in a duplication of machinery, the competitive struggle for existence in which all these denominations are engaged. In the second place, each minority group, forced to organize into a new sect because of the unwillingness of the other denominations to allow views contrary to their tests of fellowship, has, in turn, safeguarded its distinctive beliefs by formulating them into definite articles of faith.

The church's creeds thereby came to assume a significance of vital importance. Exposition of Scripture being the pivotal factor of public worship, it was essential that the message of the clergy should reflect the doctrines of the sect they served. As a further safeguard against internal dissensions, acceptance of the church's creed was made one of the principal criteria by which to attest a person's qualification for entering, and remaining in, its communion. Even this insistence might not have proved so serious had the church undertaken, as occasion demanded, to revise its doctrines in the light of advancing knowledge. For the most part, the bodies politic of the various denominations have sought escape from a candid facing of the issue by allowing their clergy increasing latitude in the interpretation of their basic doctrines. All might, however, have been well had the clergy of every denomination

sought to harmonize their message with current knowledge. But while one section of the Protestant clergy have attempted to adjust their faith and message to the findings of modern science and scholarship, another section have held tenaciously to a literal acceptance of the church's creeds. Meantime, considerable publicity has been given to these conflicting viewpoints. Of the innumerable books and magazine articles bearing on the subject, some have been content to draw attention to the new departures from traditional views made necessary by the disclosures of modern research; others have stressed the necessity of abandoning certain of the church's doctrines believed to have been made obsolete by the new knowledge; while yet others have attempted to prove that no conflict exists today between science and religion. The result has been to stimulate considerable independent thinking; to magnify the importance of religious beliefs; to leave the impression on hosts of Protestant laymen that religion is primarily a private affair.

In view of the conflict between the progressive and the conservative ranks of the Protestant clergy, and the further fact that the layman now exercises more independence of thought, it is not surprising that the latter should often find himself at variance with the theological emphasis of his particular church. For there is little continuity in the message of the modern Protestant pulpit. This is largely due

to economic conditions which do not encourage the clergymen of the smaller churches to remain long in the same parish. It not infrequently happens that the messages of predecessor and successor have little in common; for an ultraliberal may be followed by an extreme conservative, and vice versa. Hence, it is not uncommon to find Protestants of pronounced religious opinions absenting themselves from the church of which they are communicants, when they find themselves sitting under the ministry of one of opposite beliefs. While those of conservative convictions may seek to attach themselves to some other church, the message of which is more in accord with their own beliefs, those of more liberal persuasion are less inclined to take that course. Their habit of worship gradually weakens, new habits are formed, and, with the passing of time, they become more and more disinclined to resume their former custom of church attendance. Protestantism is undoubtedly losing many of its communicants every year from this one factor alone.

Much could also be said of the personality of the resident clergyman as a factor in modern American Protestantism. Sectarianism has created a big demand for ministers. When one recalls the fact that few towns in America of a thousand inhabitants do not have one or more resident clergymen, and that the larger cities have a far greater num-

ber, one could scarcely expect them all to be well-qualified by training, speaking ability, and social qualities for the work to which they are conscientiously devoted. Especially is this true in the non-liturgical churches of Protestantism where the central feature of public worship is the sermon. It is not surprising, therefore, if large numbers of educated Protestants, especially in the smaller towns, stand aloof from organized religion. Ignorance, tactlessness, and other serious shortcomings on the part of clergymen are responsible for the indifference of many Protestants to the church. On the other hand, the arrogance and bigotry of these same laymen, as well as the narrow-mindedness and hypocrisy of many lay pillars of the church, are causes that must not be overlooked.

Moreover, there are numerous Protestants in America today who, having been encouraged to develop their own theological thinking, are making no effort to harmonize their religious beliefs with the creeds of the church nor yet with the teachings of the Bible. They mold their beliefs in the light of modern science or pseudoscience, and without investigation, of which most of them are incapable, they accept the validity of teachings on questions of creation, man's place in the universe, "why we behave like human beings," the existence and nature of God, the immortality of the soul, and the like. These beliefs or misbeliefs are oftener

acquired, not from the preacher and the hour of public worship, but at second-hand from the week-end house party where they discuss religion in dilettante fashion with like minds, while the less serious members of their families abandon themselves to innocent pastimes or less innocent intrigues. Or they wander forth to the golf club early on Sunday morning where, after an invigorating game and a good luncheon, they air their private religious beliefs or declaim on the degeneracy of the times and of modern youth in particular, utterly indifferent to the fact that the caddy, who belongs to the uneducated masses, may need a little moral instruction and big-brotherly guidance and the example of Sunday worship to save him from the degeneracy so much deplored.

The future of Protestantism is further imperiled by the effect upon the younger generation of their elders' attitude toward the church. It is most difficult to enlist the interest and loyalty of children whose parents display the greatest indifference toward the church's activities. Little value is attached to the religious instruction imparted by the church to its youth, judging from the irregular attendance at the Sunday school as compared with their regularity at the public schools. No little lassitude is shown, even by the parents who actively support the church, in the matter of their children's religious education. Whatever may be the causes, it is a

recognized fact that thousands of Protestant children are today receiving little or no religious instruction directly from the church. To be specific, two out of every three Protestant children and young people under twenty-five years of age receive no formal religious training. Whatever definite instruction the minority receive is practically negligible because it is invariably given by teachers who are untrained, whose knowledge of religion, the Bible, the church, is a pitiful apology for the real. No wonder we are traveling in a circle and merely marking time.

In taking cognizance of some of the weaknesses and dangers of modern American Protestantism, we do not underestimate its contribution to the life of the nation and to human advancement. It is hard to conceive how the liberty, cultural advantages, and innumerable benefits which science has made possible during recent years, and enjoyed today by the American people, would have been known, had it not been for the very emphasis, considered in the present chapter, which Protestantism has laid upon its message. The writer has stated elsewhere:[3] "if strife is to give way to harmony, racial hatreds to universal brotherhood, oppression and injustice to the rule and reign of righteousness, we must continue to look to the church to effect the desired change." Our present concern, however, is not with

[3] *A Permanent Faith: a New Approach,* Chapter XV.

the church's service to the past or present. Nor is it concerned with those who have succeeded in adjusting their faith to current knowledge; nor yet with the loyal devotion which the church is still able to command. It is primarily concerned with that large section of Protestantism which today is standing aloof from the church; with the causes for this aloofness; its possible effect on future Protestantism; and the challenge which such an attitude makes to the church to recover the allegiance of the indifferent.

Chapter Two

LIBERALIZING RELIGION

For some years past, scholarship and science have pursued their independent courses oblivious to the claims of traditional or pontifical authority. Their one concern has been fidelity to facts. Many cherished opinions and strongly embedded beliefs have thus been shattered, in the light of the new knowledge. Much has been learned about the universe, its history and laws; considerable new information has been acquired relative to ancient and backward races, their religious conceptions, experiences, and customs; much has been gained by way of more accurate knowledge of the Bible, its origin, authorship, and purpose. This great mass of new knowledge has rendered untenable many of the older beliefs. The problem is not solved by ignoring this fact, for what proves unconvincing cannot long hold men's affection. For the church to impart instruction to modern youth that fails to harmonize with their knowledge of the recent findings of literary criticism, historical research, and physical phenomena will neither serve to commend Protestantism to them nor yet to insure for organized religion a virile future. To cast the intellect out of the coun-

cils of the soul and to refuse any adjustment of faith to facts is to invite the alienation of educated people from the church. It has become urgent, therefore, however disastrous the attempt might prove, to blend the new knowledge and the old faith in a new combination.

In seeking to trace the modern liberalizing movement within Protestantism, there may be noted three groups of facts, that have called for the modification, or the displacement, of ancestral beliefs. In the first place, Biblical scholarship challenged traditional views regarding the nature of Scripture, so that religious thinking had to be clarified on the question of inspiration. Second, science challenged the historicity of Biblical miracles, and a readjustment had to be made in accord with the definite laws which govern the universe. Finally, a change was necessary to harmonize with the pronouncements of science regarding the age, nature, and history of the universe, more particularly the origin of man.

"When we parted," writes Alfred Loisy in his autobiographical sketch, "for the vacation in the summer of 1881, he (Duchesne) put into my hands the volume of Tischendorf's classical edition of the New Testament containing the Gospels, that I might gain some idea of the processes of textual criticism. But I went beyond his intention, not satisfying myself with observing the various read-

ings of the manuscripts, but comparing the Gospel narratives with one another. I was astounded, the farther I progressed, never to have noticed the contradictions before. It became clearly apparent to me, as it must to every one who does not wilfully blind himself to the evidence, that these writings require to be as freely interpreted as they were freely composed. It is vain to treat, as rigorously historical, texts that are obviously not so in the least. . . . For instance, I saw clearly that the narratives of the birth of Christ in Matthew and Luke must have arisen from different sources, and are not capable of being reconciled so as to make consistent history. . . . The same held good of the narratives of the resurrection. . . . What fell away from me at this juncture was the theological interpretation of Scriptural inspiration. I perceived that the sacred books were written as all books are written, only with less exactness and care than many. If the Holy Spirit had entered in, it could not be to transform them into historical sources of the first rank."[1] This is the conclusion of Biblical scholarship which has shattered traditional belief in the inspiration and inerrancy of the Bible.

For centuries the church taught that the Bible is God's final and infallible word to the human race. All that is contained therein had either been spoken directly to their authors by God himself, had

[1] *My Duel with the Vatican,* p. 86 f.

been transmitted to them by his special emissaries, or the authors had written it while controlled by some superhuman force. No word, or even letter, had been wrongly recorded, nor had a single error crept into the numerous transcriptions and translations of the original text. Moreover, tradition had ascribed to certain men the authorship of specific books of the Bible. The authorship of the Pentateuch was ascribed to Moses, and that of the Psalms to David. Internal evidence of style and historical events shows, however, that many of the Psalms could not have been written by David any more than the second half of Isaiah was by the author of the earlier chapters. The same holds true of the Pentateuch with respect to the various documents, at least four, which are woven into it, and to the numerous incidents and laws which clearly belong to a period later than that of Moses. It is not necessary to give in detail the story of the interesting and significant findings of Biblical criticism as to corrupted texts, interpolations, emendations, composite documents, historical inaccuracies, legends taken from non-Jewish sources, and symbolism no longer understood. It is sufficient to say that Biblical scholarship has undermined, at least for educated Protestants, the conception of the Bible as a supernatural book. This being the case, Protestantism has been confronted with the task of adjusting religious think-

ing to these ascertained results. It was the first contribution made by Liberalism to modern thought.

Harry Emerson Fosdick, in his *The Modern Use of the Bible,*[2] notes that "there are four different connotations to the idea of the miraculous." 1. Primitive people held the universe to abound in invisible spirits, which were held responsible for every movement for which man could not be held accountable. According to the nature of the results they produced —beneficial, injurious, or harmlessly freakish—these movements were thought to have been motivated by friendliness, enmity, or caprice. This animistic conception of nature allowed for no settled order or regularity. The most unusual occurrence was accepted as the natural expression of some unknown spirit or spirits. 2. Experience taught men to expect a certain regularity in connection with those movements of life lying outside the realm of human control. The appearance and disappearance after definite periods, for instance, of sun, moon, and the several seasons, came to be relied upon as dependable. Nevertheless, the invisible will that regulated these conditions might at any time, and for some unknown reason, interrupt the accustomed order known to long experience. Such interruptions would not be sufficient cause for surprise, however much they might be deplored or welcomed according to the injuries or blessings they bestowed. 3.

[2] Chapter V, "Law and Miracle."

It remained for Greek thought first to arrive at the conception of cosmic order. While the church came later to share the view that the universe is governed by certain definite laws, it did not abandon its belief in miracles. On the contrary, cosmic order simply served to make all the more pronounced the supernatural nature of miracles. They came to be held as interventions in an otherwise well-regulated system by a God who "was more powerful than the system, vast and impressive though it was." 4. The modern view of the universe is that of an order which allows for no irregularities. Long and patient observation of nature's habitual procedure has resulted in certain mathematical formulæ which have come to be generally accepted as irrevocable laws. In short, current scientific data not merely discredit miracles, as contrary to contemporary experience and our present knowledge of phenomena, but make the possibility of their occurrence most remote.

Philosophy likewise had long reasoned for a cosmic order that allowed for no intermissions in the operation of its laws. But so long as demonstration was restricted to philosophic reasoning, little serious headway was made against belief in the historicity of Biblical miracles. Christian apologists felt themselves as justified in their assumptions, as were those who accepted the unsubstantiated speculations of the schools. Besides, did not the inerrant Word of God warrant faith in the validity of their oc-

currence? In the meantime, however, Biblical scholarship, along independent lines, was corroborating the conclusions of philosophy which, later, were to be vindicated by science. It was discovered that much that tradition had taught as historical could no longer be so taken. Duplicate records of the same incident could not be made to harmonize even by the most ingenious reasoning. Differences and discrepancies made clear their unreliability as historical documents. Moreover, the literature of all primitive people was found to abound in similar records of miraculous happenings. In fact, certain similarities to non-Jewish legends caused the inference to be made that, in all probability, the biographers of Jesus had drawn from this source accounts of a wonder-working power which they accredited to their hero. Biblical scholarship had therefore made it very evident that the Bible was written in an age and for a people which regarded the miraculous as a matter of course. Consequently, when the conception of cosmic order passed from the realm of speculation to that of definite, well-authenticated evidence, it was readily accepted, all the more as Biblical miracles had been considerably undermined. A second epochal stage was thus reached in modern religious thinking. The supernatural, having been eliminated from the Bible, was now in turn eliminated from the governance of

nature so as to remove the probability of Biblical miracles.

But the new persuasion struck deeper than the mere discarding of belief in miracles as a tenet of faith. Tradition had inextricably associated miracles with the personality of the founder of the Christian system of religion. Miracles were accepted as evidence of Jesus' uniqueness, and his virgin birth stamped him as divine. The further miracle of his resurrection after crucifixion testified to his godhood. Once miracles were repudiated as contrary to contemporary experience and held very improbable in the light of current knowledge of phenomena, doubt was cast on the traditional belief regarding the nature of Jesus. Faith in his virgin birth and resurrection came to share the fate of miracles in general, and with the passing of those beliefs, misgivings arose with respect to Jesus' divinity. Was he after all God's only begotten Son sent into the world to atone for man's sins? It was the second great task Liberalism was called upon to undertake, namely, to adjust religious thinking to the modern conception of cosmic order, with special reference to the personality and power of Jesus.

A third item which called for drastic adjustment of religious thinking was necessitated by the evolutionary hypothesis. The Genesis story of creation gave way to the conception of a gradually evolving universe, requiring many æons to arrive

at its present status. Nor had man, as part of a universal system, escaped the age-long process of evolving life, for he too had arrived at his present status after millennia of struggle and adaptation. So convincing proved the evidence and arguments favoring the new hypothesis that it is exceptional to find a college graduate today who does not accept the evolutionary explanation of phenomena, at least in its main contention. The need was now felt to reconcile religious thinking to the new cosmogony by revaluing the Genesis story of creation. It was concluded to be a popular theory given by a prescientific age concerning the origin of the universe with its endless expressions of life. The conclusion was further strengthened by the discovery of certain Babylonian tablets containing an account of creation bearing many similarities to the Genesis story. Authorities are now generally agreed that, far from recording historical fact and bearing the impress of divine origin, the Genesis explanation of the world and of life, especially of man, had been drawn from an earlier Babylonian tradition. In the face of these facts, what was to prevent the race from weaving at any time some new hypothesis of the origin and history of life? Surely it might reasonably be expected that some gains would be made by way of keener insight into and a more accurate knowledge of, phenomena from centuries of experience, observation, and research. Was the race to

be forever bound to Jewish conceptions, many of which, as in the case of its belief in divine creative fiats, had in all probability been derived from earlier non-Jewish sources and assimilated with slight modification?

The bitter opposition to the evolutionary hypothesis was due to the fact that traditional theology had long relied on the historicity of the Genesis story of creation. For many centuries the church had taught that man had been created perfect and placed in a garden of beauty, harmony, and plenty. For some inscrutable reason, which theology has never been able satisfactorily to explain, evil found its way into Eden and to its subtle persuasion our first parents fell victims. Certain terrible woes fell upon these progenitors of the race, and all their descendants consequently shared in the effects of the fall. Among these are man's natural depravity, physical death, and punishment after death for sins committed in the body. From two of these woes no escape has yet been found; from the last, escape has been provided by Jesus' efficacious death. It is upon these beliefs in a "fall" and an "atonement" that the whole superstructure of traditional theology rests. Modern science, however, provides a different explanation for man's origin and moral consciousness. Far from being created perfect and placed in a perfect environment, the race has struggled through countless æons from the lowest forms

of life to its present status. At no point in its history has a "fall," such as the book of Genesis records, been known; the history of man is the story of one continuous ascent. Through innumerable generations the human race has grappled with the problem of its own ignorance and limitations, ever striving to master the forces of disease and death. In this newer view of life the need of an "atonement" is not urgently felt. Ignorance is conceded to be the cause of man's innumerable woes. For this ignorance he must not be held accountable, since it will eventually give place to positive knowledge leading to the mitigation of human suffering and the mastery of the ills of life.

The church's doctrine of eternal punishment has likewise been repudiated as groundless. In this instance also, the data supplied by Biblical scholarship have gone farther toward confirming than refuting the changed and changing attitude of the Protestant masses toward the church's doctrines of the atonement and eternal punishment. H. G. Wells forcibly summarizes one radical difference, and it throws light on the whole situation. "Presently there arose a second great teacher, whom many modern authorities regard as the real founder of Christianity, Saul of Tarsus, or Paul. . . . What will be clear to anyone who reads his various Epistles, side by side with the Gospels, is that his mind was saturated by an idea which does not appear

at all prominently in the reported sayings and teachings of Jesus, the idea of a sacrificial person, who is offered up to God as an atonement for sin. What Jesus preached was a new birth of the human soul; what Paul preached was the ancient religion of priest and altar and propitiatory bloodshed. Jesus was to him the Easter Lamb, that traditional human victim without spot or blemish who haunts all the religions of the dark white peoples. Paul came to the Nazarenes with overwhelming force because he came to them with this complete satisfactory explanation of the disaster of the crucifixion. It was a brilliant elucidation of what had been utterly perplexing." [3] In this particular passage Wells tersely states the newer evaluation of Pauline theology in so far as it embodies an appraisal and interpretation of Jesus' ministry in the light of Calvary. Extensive and intensive research has marked the changing conceptions relating to the atonement and eternal punishment. The conclusions arrived at coincide with Wells' statement that the conception of faith in his crucifixion as an efficacious means for man's deliverance from future retribution is alien to Jesus' own thought of his death, whereas sacrifice and vicarious suffering have formed an integral part of the religious rituals of all unenlightened white people. Scholarship, far from placing unnecessary obstructions in the way, encouraged by the results of

[3] *The Outline of History,* (One-vol. Ed.) p. 510 f.

its researches those corollaries of belief which the theory of evolution had rendered inevitable.

The evolutionary hypothesis, furthermore, has not only upset the older theories of redemption, but has also nullified the earlier conceptions of God. While striving to rid the belief of all traces of anthropomorphism, men have continued to think of God in terms of human personality. Personality lends concreteness and reality to the Christian God, so that many religious exercises and associated beliefs are feasible. Men are not inclined to pray, for instance, to an abstract, invisible, impersonal force. No more does impersonality inspire trustfulness. Faith in an overruling Providence with the assurance of personal safety and direction rests on the assumption of a personal God. So long as the universe was held to be the product of some deity, it was not difficult for men to think of God in terms of human personality. But once the Creator of traditional theology has been displaced by the idea of evolutionary force, misgivings arose regarding the Being of Christian experience. The strange thing is that while many notable scientists are pronounced in their protestations of a stronger faith in a Supreme Being because of life's ever-widening outlook and keener insights, vast numbers of people are losing their grip on the reality of God as experienced by earlier generations. Observation and reason may call for the postulate of a God to account for the

presence in nature of intelligence, order, beauty, progress, and purpose. But the assurance of God's nearness, intimacy, and personal interest known to a prescientific age through the medium of prayer, has been considerably disturbed by the modern consciousness of the vastness of time and space, the long, marvelous evolution of the universe, especially of human life, and the newer hypothesis which has reduced all phenomena to energy, governed by inflexible and impartial laws. This latter consciousness has rendered prayer impossible for many, while faith in an overruling Providence and the hope of experiencing protection and aid by entrusting personal life to his care and keeping have been seriously shaken. And once men are convinced of the futility of Christian fellowship and trust, it becomes comparatively simple to eliminate God from their conceptions of phenomena.

The newly acquired knowledge has so revolutionized men's religious outlook and beliefs that it has affected the individual's religious experience and the church's program. This change may perhaps best be illustrated by two quotations from Alfred Loisy's *My Duel with the Vatican.* Referring to his religious experience of seminary days, he wrote, "At first, the exercises of piety, the well-sung services, the impressive cathedral ceremonies, greatly affected me. The morning silent prayer exalted me to the skies; I abandoned myself to it with a naïve fervor;

no shadow of a doubt had then arisen to cloud my relations with the world of divine realities. In the church, the chants threw me sometimes into a sort of tremulous ecstasy." [4] It was a different story when he found himself critically examining the foundations of that faith, which had once proved so potent to stir the emotional strains of his religious nature! "Just in the degree to which certain of these objects of faith had impressed me when employed as sources of religious emotion, to that same degree their scholastic exposition in terms of naked intellect filled my mind with ill-defined disquiet. Now that I was required to think all these things rationally, and not merely to feel them, I was thrown into a state of prolonged disturbance." [5] This experience of disillusion is shared by many thousands.

So long as doctrines of faith are tacitly accepted as the basis of emotional life, no disturbance is known to mar the joy experienced. But when men are called upon to define their faith in terms of the intellect, their emotions are often found to disappear and their zeal to wane. "Th' Apostles' Creed niver was as convincin' to me," comments the inimitable Mr. Dooley, "after I larned to r-read it as it was when I cudden't read it but believed it." Head and heart often prove ill-mated companions. What

[4] Page 64.
[5] *Ibid.* p. 71.

men gain in breadth they frequently lose in intensity. Mark Sabre complains in *If Winter Comes,* that his habit of seeing so many sides of a subject had left him utterly incapable of impelling convictions. His experience is not singular. As a general rule, the more universal men's sympathies become the less enthusiasm do they seem to possess. Indeed, it is only by extreme care and rigid discipline that the emotional life is preserved against the shattering onslaughts of ruthless criticism. This is true of religious emotion as of any other emotion. Feelings of patriotism, sympathy or hero-worship invariably suffer under an intellectual scrutiny of those objects which constitute the stimuli indispensable to their existence. It would seem that with rare exceptions men are forbidden to approach too near to the ark of their sacred ideals. To handle it too familiarly, or to scrutinize its contents too closely, is to suffer death. And it is this very thing that has happened to thousands of Protestant Christians during recent years. Critical examination of the objects of faith has resulted in the devitalization of religious emotion. Liberalism is thus compelled to find an adequate intellectual basis for devotional life, which is at once the source of the inspiration and strength of Christian conduct. Should its springs dry up the loss would be incalculable.

Since Paul went forth to convert the world of his day to the validity of Christ's claims as Redeemer

of the race, the church has never ceased to feel the urge of Christian evangelism. The underlying assumption of Christian evangelism is that men are doomed to perdition unless they repent of their evil ways and make public confession of their faith in the efficacy of Jesus' death as the one means of obtaining divine forgiveness. Those held in the grip of these convictions are persuaded that it is of crucial importance whether or not men avail themselves of this one means of escape from eternal punishment. Keen concern is felt for those who neglect or trifle with a matter so vital to their whole future welfare; death might at any moment place them forever beyond the reach of hope and mercy. But as these convictions have weakened, evangelical zeal has correspondingly waned. It is undoubtedly true that the old passion is no longer felt except by those who have rejected the modern viewpoint.

The same holds true of the church's missionary program, which is really evangelism in its wider application. The old incentive for missionary effort has lost its imperative force for liberal Christians, who no longer believe that ignorance of Christ dooms the heathen to eternal punishment. Despite the more statesmanlike policy of missionary activities during the present century, the memory and impression unfortunately still linger of sectarian rivalry on the foreign field and the tendency of capitalists and governments to exploit the advantages accruing

from the pioneer work of Christian missionaries. The modern social consciousness is also inclined toward the opinion that if the money now expended on efforts to Christianize the heathen were spent on securing justice for backward races at the hands of Christian governments the method would prove more effective and convincing than the means now adopted for their Christianization. In this connection it may be said that many of our religious and independent periodicals are doing splendid work in keeping their readers informed of those incidents in foreign relationships which are incompatible with Christian ethics. Then again, the knowledge gained during recent years of the non-Christian religions has led some to question the wisdom of offering Christianity to Orientals whose religions are well enough adapted to their needs. They seem to feel that the missionary program is rooted in an intellectual snobbery which considers its own religious outlook and faith superior to that of any other people. Whatever the causes of mistrust or dissatisfaction, it is clear that the church's missionary program has to be radically changed if it is to command the support of its members. Here again is seen the task of Liberalism to supply a new motive and basis for the evangelistic and missionary activities of the modern church.

To be sure, no easy mandate has been laid upon Christian leadership by the new learning. "Mod-

ernism is engaged in a difficult undertaking. Orthodox Christian theology was a good many centuries in the making. . . . Modernism has undertaken to meet the most difficult questions that the age can put forth. One after another of its exponents puts forth a suggestion and each suggestion proves inadequate. Some day there may be a synthesis that will satisfy the minds of men. It will not be perfect; it will not be final; but it will be the best that the times can offer. So far we have not done even that much, but at least we are alive to the needs of the day, and that is the real essential.[6] But is it fair to hold Modernists wholly responsible for prevailing theories and beliefs? Liberal Christians have not furnished the data responsible for current convictions. They have candidly and honestly faced the new facts and attempted to harmonize religious faith with present knowledge. It has been no small service rendered by liberal leadership in preserving religious assurance for innumerable people. Thousands, happily, have been able to adjust their faith to the new conditions. To them no conflict exists between science and religion. On the contrary, they are conscious of a debt of gratitude to science for enriching the content of their faith.

Others, however, have unfortunately failed, or only partly succeeded, in blending the old faith and

[6] *The Congregationalist,* October 14, 1926, p. 484.

the new knowledge with any measure of satisfaction. These individuals are at once a menace to future Protestantism and a challenge to the church, since they stand aloof from organized religion. Thus far the church's message, approach, and ministry have failed to win their allegiance. In short, Liberalism has not yet succeeded in evolving an evangelicalism sufficiently potent to appeal either to their intelligence or conscience.

In this connection it is interesting to note some of the activities and interests upon which the zeal and devotion of the liberal churches have been expended since evangelism lost its place of supremacy in the church's program. Social and recreational programs have been emphasized, but they have hardly done what the evangelism of a former day accomplished. The church has also found out that it is unable to compete with commercialized amusements and the activities of the public schools, and that its new ventures have not enlisted youth in public worship or private devotions. Attempts to interest the laboring classes in organized religion have been equally futile. In like manner, efforts to solve the rural problem by directing attention to the economic struggles and difficulties of the farmer and his children have not carried far. Rural populations are migrating in larger numbers to the cities and suburbs, so that the rural church is facing a serious deficit in members. Then again, plans for

enriching worship by æsthetic improvements in church architecture and liturgical changes indicate an advance over the deplorable emptiness of Puritan plainness.

The commendableness of some of these activities and interests of the modern liberal church goes without question, but it is a significant fact that they should have made their appearance at a time when evangelism had begun to wane. The coincidence makes one wonder to what extent they may have resulted from a semiconscious need for new channels through which to express the Christian devotion and zeal which no longer could find expression through evangelistic activities. Were these methods adopted to make up for the meagerness of the message offered by the liberal church? Modernism has certainly not yet found the appeal which proved so potent to capture and hold men as did the old evangelical appeal. It is worth recalling that when John Wesley began his evangelistic campaign the church had no program of active sympathy to commend it to the laboring classes of England. On the other hand, the Church of England had much to offer by way of æsthetic attraction, but its edifices were empty. Ignorance, viciousness, and immorality were rampant throughout the land. But when Wesley gave his clarion call the response was instantaneous and widespread. "The early disciples," writes Stanley Jones, the author of *The Christ of the*

Indian Road, "had little ritual but a mighty realization." This was the secret of Wesley's work. Modernism thus far has failed to convince men of either possessing or knowing that secret.

Despite the failure of Liberalism to meet adequately the devastating effect of the new knowledge, the situation is encouraging. "Perplexed but not dismayed," its leaders have brought the wealth of their learning and devotion to the problem created by the recently acquired mass of scientific data. With unflinching candor they have faced the facts, however disturbing, and have sought, not without considerable success, to translate those abiding realities of religion into terms of current thought. With splendid courage and determination they have attempted to interest the indifferent in the church's ministry. The approaches adopted have not proved wholly successful, but at least they testify to an earnest effort to cope with the changed outlook, conceptions, and conditions. Nor have the church's missionary activities been neglected. Liberal leaders have applied themselves to the task of adapting the policy and approach of foreign missions to meet the approval of a better informed and more exacting public. The charge often brought against the message of Modernism is that it leaves men cold and unresponsive. And yet evidence is not lacking that many liberal leaders have arrived at certain positive religious convictions and certitudes

which are at once challenging, constructive, and convincing. The new content that is being given to some of the old evangelical terms—sin, salvation, retribution, the Cross—and the shifting of the emphasis from the importance of accurate beliefs to the supreme need of Christian living, are in themselves gratifying. Nor is there reason to doubt that Modernism will finally arrive at a synthesis of faith, out of which will emerge an evangelicalism that shall prove as potent as any evangel of bygone days in its appeal to both the intelligence and the conscience of the age.

Chapter Three

WHAT CRITICS SAY OF THE CHURCH

I

ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES

THE student of modern American Protestantism who ignores the economic factor in ecclesiastical relationships overlooks one of the important determinants in prevailing conditions. No little Protestant ineffectiveness is due to the competitive system within the ministerial profession. Its evils are many, while its tentacles reach out into every department of the church's organized activities. They engender a pernicious mood among ministers and laity, not to speak of the unfavorable reaction on the man outside the church who watches the rivalry between the various denominations.

It may be taken for granted that few men enter the Christian ministry from selfish motives. Were it merely a question of making money, the Christian ministry, as a vocation, would receive scant consideration from the university trained men of the land. But once in the actual ministry, the young minister's purposes often suffer in an unexpected

way. So subtle is the transformation that comes over him that the change takes place before he is aware of it. He leaves the seminary for a position that pays a mere pittance, and soon discovers that it will take years of self-denial to free himself from the debts accumulated in school. True, he had not anticipated that the profession would be a bed of roses. But he failed to realize the amount of strength and courage required to sacrifice in the midst of abundance. Were his lot cast among those less fortunate than himself, he would endure his privations without complaint. But he finds himself among a people who are comfortably situated or who have, at least, some prospect of prosperity. He soon finds himself raising the question, "Am I justified in sacrificing myself in the midst of plenty, and for a people who can well afford to pay me a living wage?" The question becomes more acutely felt when he finds himself obligated to provide for a wife and children. What would happen to those he loves should permanent disability or death overtake him? How could he pay for his children's education and provide against the needs of old age? Such economic questions which he cannot evade seriously threaten the young minister's idealism.

There is another consideration which affects his purpose. A little distance away a minister of the same denomination is drawing a salary considerably larger than his own, and he naturally asks himself

why he should be content to live on a mere pittance under such circumstances. The Christian ministry offers as many opportunities for advancement as any other profession. There are within most denominations all variety of churches, paying from starvation wages to competent stipends. Why should not the young minister of meager salary qualify for a better paying position? Why should he not make his present charge a stepping-stone to something more remunerative? Is he not justified in seizing any offer that may come to him (regardless of the opportunities for service that his present location may present) that promises escape from economic serfdom? In a word, his temptation is to sacrifice his Christian idealism to economic expediency. Of course, he still intends to make service his life's great purpose. But why may he not serve on a larger, just as well as on a smaller, salary? As a matter of fact, he has surrendered his ideal of disinterested service to material prosperity.

Once the young minister recognizes that he, too, is the victim of the competitive system, he will seek to discover, and to apply himself to, those methods and means that guarantee success. Experience will soon teach him that "quick returns" are of supreme value in the economic struggle in which he is engaged and that tangible results in the form of increased money and members are generally accepted as signs of ministerial ability. That minister is pro-

nounced successful who is able to show an increase of membership and attendance at every department of his church's activities, who is able to raise the figures of his budget, especially for the support of his denominational machinery. The quicker and greater his returns, the better chance he stands of favorable recognition.

What does this imply? It compels the young minister to enter into the keenest competition with the men, not only of his own, but of all denominations. His task is "to make good." But such is the task of every other minister. It is necessary, therefore, that he shall effectively meet the challenge of his fellow competitors. By some means, fair or foul, he must attract people and interest them in his own specific religious organization. Service becomes a secondary matter. He must learn the art of "catching" men for his own cause. To accomplish this, he must compete with every minister of the community in matters of advertising. Too much money is spent on advertising to question its importance as a business asset. A well-established firm, organization, or profession may regard further publicity as unnecessary; but to the obscure, who feel the pressure of competition, advertisements are of vital importance. It is, therefore, the task of the minister to excel his brethren of the profession in the art of advertising. Nor can the young minister who is striving to further his personal interests afford to

ignore the spice of novelty and variety even though they are offenses against good taste. Novel methods, new stunts, peppy innovations, and ingenious devices are not to be disdained if the curiosity of the crowd is to be aroused. After he has attracted the unattached (granted he is honest enough to refrain from proselyting), there still remains the sphere of personal qualities to capture for himself. He must tower above the rest of his fellow ministers either as a speaker or in social qualities, preferably in both. Fortunate is that young minister who, in addition to the other demands made of him, becomes known as the best speaker and most popular preacher in his community.

The young minister, however, finds himself engaged in more than a local struggle; he must compete with the men of his own denomination. There are numerous churches scattered throughout the country whose doors remain closed. This is due to the fact that their members are unable to support a minister. When we come to the better paying churches the supply is found to be more than equal to the demand. There is always a large number of ministers who are waiting for an opportunity to improve their financial status. And advancement for the obscure man rests almost entirely with the denominational official under whose charge he happens to be. There are denominations whose churches are granted considerable autonomy in the manage-

ment of their local affairs. These not infrequently select their ministers without consulting outside officials. To this class of church a young minister may be introduced and called through the recommendation of some friend. But until such time as he has won for himself a large circle of ministerial friends, or has achieved more than a local reputation, he must invariably look to his bishop or superintendent to recommend him to the consideration of other churches. It is, therefore, imperative that he should gain the approbation of those upon whom his chances for promotion depend. Ignoring all evidence of favoritism—found in church as well as other relationships—our young friend must attract the attention of those under whose charge he is. Here again, as in the case of the local situation, "numbers" are of primary importance. There lies on my desk as I write an official questionnaire relating to the Easter Membership Campaign now established as an annual custom in many of our Protestant churches. The information desired is, in brief: "How many members did you take into your church Easter Sunday? How many on Confession of Faith? How many by letter? And what were the methods used to secure these results?" However far removed the purpose of these questionnaires may be, the work of the young minister, as he answers or refuses to answer these questions, goes on record. "Results" are made the test of his winter's endeavors.

The young minister knows that these returns are pouring into the office of his superintendent, and that he must submit a glowing report if advancement is to be secured.

He is also fully aware that in his efforts to impress his denominational leaders with the merits of his claim to preference, he is competing with the rest of his brethren of the ministry, especially those belonging to the class receiving a stipend comparable with his own. Nor is this all. If his financial status is to be improved, the young minister must get behind all denominational programs, however unreasonable or exorbitant some of them may appear to be, and support his denominational machinery. The denominational machinery must of necessity depend upon the loyalty of the local church for its existence. Consequently, the local church is asked to share with the rest of the churches of the body politic the expenses incurred in extension work, missionary enterprises, educational activities, and in the general upkeep of the larger organization. Now the bigness of the machinery depends on the size of the churches within the sect in which it operates. The demand made of the local church is determined by the size of its budget. The funds at the disposal of those in office depend on the number of active churches within the denomination.

The economic struggle now enters from the local to the wider field of sectarian competition. Sect is

pitted against sect in its endeavors to capture new territory or to maintain and to expand the work already established. And the size of the denominational budget determines the number of its high-salaried official positions; for the greatness of responsibility involved in any office must be met by equally great ability, which, in turn, must be correspondingly remunerated. It is, therefore, to the interest of sectarian officialdom that the machinery shall not only be kept going, but that the denomination shall enlarge rather than diminish. Sectarian officials, too, are caught in the thrall of the competitive system. The denomination they serve must hold its own against the aggressiveness of other religious bodies, and, if possible, strengthen its position even at the expense of all other sects. And in the economic struggle in which the denomination is engaged, the sectarian official must rely on the local pastor for support. He depends on him for the execution of his programs and for the raising of his ever growing budgets. And the young minister knows that if ever he is to gain favor in the eyes of those above him, upon whom his welfare so largely hangs, he must meet their requirements, however exacting. "To make good" involves substantial increases in the church's contributions for the wider denominational program and activities. Insurgency may be tolerated in one who is too well established to be either hindered or destroyed; but the young

minister soon learns that loyalty to the denominational machine pays better than open criticism or revolt.

Several obvious evils resulting from this economic struggle in organized religion may be stated briefly. In the first place, the young minister is tempted, if not compelled, to sacrifice quality in his work to quantity. Many learn from bitter experience that such a thing as a thorough training of a group of young people for Sunday-school work does not count. It is not an activity which attracts wide attention. Nor is there any special merit of a spectacular sort attached to the task of drilling a young men's class or a congregation in the practical application of Christ's teaching, that would make for a better quality of Christian living, especially as it affects their human relationships. The young minister discovers that such service is at a discount in the economic struggle in which he is engaged. During at least the early years of his ministry, he cannot afford to lay out extensive and carefully evolved educational plans which require a period of years for their execution. His own economic struggle, as well as the demands of the church he serves, necessitates plans and methods that, in their working, bear evidence of progress. His primary task is to enlarge his membership rolls,—church, Sunday school, young people's society, etc.,—to fill his church pews, and to increase his church budget. These are the

things that count to his advantage. And often he so far forgets himself in his anxiety to give evidence of his worth as to violate the common ethical principles of honesty, truthfulness, and justice. He practices the shrewdest methods of the business world; never fails to take an undue advantage of a fellow minister; succumbs to schemes of wholesale proselyting; and perverts all ethical sense in his efforts "to succeed."

The effect of the competitive system on the local church is no less pernicious and pronounced. In the first place, each church is out to procure the best possible man "in the market." It is not considered unethical for a church to hold out every inducement to persuade a minister to resign his present charge in its favor. If the church with which it is competing is able to raise its price, or the minister is unwilling to relinqush his work for the advantages offered him, then it must continue its quest in another direction. Churches not only recognize the right of a minister to further his material interests, but encourage him to do so by their own competitive methods. The young minister knows that if his work does not show numerical gains, he may be asked to resign. He also knows that if ever he is to be invited to a better paying pastorate, his record of ministerial achievements must be satisfactory. His work, moreover, is judged by conditions existing in the other churches of the community. If the

church which a man serves is not enjoying as great prosperity as a neighboring church (apart from the methods used in securing that prosperity), his whole work is in danger of being underestimated, depreciated, and discredited. His congregation grows restless and dissatisfied, and eventually calls for his resignation or removal, as the case might be.

An expert knowledge of the Bible, a broad outlook on life, an uncommon insight into the deep things of God, and a sane interpretation of life's varied problems are inconsequential before the modern demand for concrete results. The quality of a minister's work and message is, alas, too often sacrificed to pretentious statistics. And sooner or later the church suffers from the system under which it exists. We have reference now specifically to the smaller churches. They suffer from short pastorates. The same competitive methods by which they secure a minister are responsible for his quick departure. No time is allowed for developing constructive educational work. Moreover, because of their hectic desire for results, churches not infrequently suffer from "watered stock." They carry a bulk of worthless material—people who are a hindrance rather than an asset to the church's life. In their anxiety for "quick returns," they lower the standard of Christian discipleship, depreciate the value of Christian fellowship, and make church membership perilously easy. All these things have a demoraliz-

ing effect on Christian living and the moral life of the community in which they are found.

There is no gainsaying the demoralizing effect of the competitive principle as operative today in the Protestant churches of America. In thousands of instances, the minister's ideal of disinterested service has succumbed to the economic struggle in which he is engaged. Straining every nerve in an endeavor to gain recognition and preferment, questionable means are often resorted to, unworthy of the high calling to which he was ordained. On the other hand, failure and extinguished hope not infrequently generate bitterness, which becomes all the more rancid because of the fears which crowd the picture of the future. The churches, in turn, suffer from a hectic impatience to have things move. Numbers are accepted as proof of spiritual advancement, much to the detriment of true religion. Denominational executives face the necessity of not only keeping intact the gains already made, but of capturing new territory. Perhaps the economic more than any other factor is responsible for the sectarian rivalry of recent years. Some day the story will be told about the strangle-hold on church property made possible by denominational policy, when communities or congregations agree to organize independently of all sectarian affiliation. Sectarianism, which today is unquestionably more of a hindrance than an aid to the progress of the Kingdom of God,

is more of an economic question than most of us surmise. Be this as it may, in a thousand and one ways modern American Protestantism is suffering from the vicious competitive system practiced within her borders.

Most congregations have, during recent years, been informed of the glaring, iniquitous disparities existing between the extremely rich and the extremely poor. Conditions of ease, luxury, and extravagance are contrasted with the grind, hardship, and privation of those living at the opposite end of the social ladder. These things are discussed in every religious conference and receive no little publicity through religious journals. Numerous religious commissions have investigated social and industrial conditions for the purpose of advising the church what attitude to assume toward some of the pressing questions of the hour. All this is to the good. But why has it not occurred to these religious leaders, who are so ardently anxious to destroy the evils of the social system, to deal with the flagrant inequalities and obvious injustices of their own profession? A bishop will passionately denounce the wrongs of the social order and fervently urge the application of Christ's teaching to industrial relationships. And yet under his supervision are men whose strength is being sapped and their spirit broken in their hopeless and unintermittent fight with poverty. And these are expected, nay, almost

compelled, to support their bishop that he may live in comparative comfort and maintain the dignity of his high office. It may be that there are not found in the ministerial profession those appalling contrasts provided by the self-indulgent extravagances of the idle rich and the drab struggles of the extremely poor. But the monetary disparities are too great and unjust to be ignored.[1] One may, therefore, well question the justice of religious superintendents and secretaries who live comfortably while the minister and his family on the pioneer field endure all manner of hardships and privations. Is it not time the church faced some of these questions before she undertakes to eliminate the evils of the industrial world?

It may be anticipated that any proposal of a standardized salary among ministers would be met by the usual arguments put forth in favor of the competitive system. The present order would be defended on the grounds that equality in wages would rob ministers of all incentive to do their best, and would tend to encourage laziness. The underlying confession of such an argument is that every clergyman is in the ministry for what he can get

[1] Even the old age pension schemes adopted during recent years by many denominations discriminate against those in most need of financial aid when they come to retirement. Remuneration is determined on the basis of the average salary of the recipient covering the years through which he has contributed to his denominational annuity fund.

out of it. It was maintained in the opening paragraph of this chapter that the majority of young men entering the ministry are actuated by unselfish motives. If a minister loses his Christian idealism for disinterested service, it is largely due to the competitive system under which he labors.

From time immemorial the world has paid homage to exceptional brains and ability. It has placed those possessing them in high office and felt in duty bound to reward them in accordance with the bigness of their responsibilities. The church has also accepted the custom of the world in this respect. But surely the standards of the church, where all men are supposed to be dedicated to the one common cause of disinterested service, should be different from those of the world. There is no New Testament evidence that God has placed a premium on brains and ability, or rewards men according to their achievements. As coworkers with God, the New Testament presumes that each minister will do his best as opportunity and gifts are granted to him. It teaches that privilege and talents are trusts that must be zealously safeguarded and liberally used. The only merit accorded to possession is the privilege of the larger responsibility and service it affords. As coworkers, the master is not above the servant, nor the servant above his lord. The harvest results from common effort, and its fruits are mutually enjoyed. Such teaching is not infrequently made

the basis of appeal for Christian giving. The humble worker is encouraged by the thought that his contribution, however small, is of equal worth in the eyes of God to the greatest contribution He receives. Then why not apply this teaching to the material rewards meted out to Christian service? The missionary who labors on the field and the missionary secretary who has oversight of his work are partners in the one enterprise. Should not the compensation be according to fidelity so that both receive equal reward, material and spiritual, for a service of equal value in the eyes of Him whom they both serve?

It will be objected that those holding the more remunerative positions have greater expenses to meet. But there are many ministers who would readily relieve some of their brethren of the expenses incurred by clubs, banquets, committee meetings, and conferences, and share the comforts of their higher standard of living, were they only privileged to do so. Such are some of the little inequalities of the Christian ministry, that while there are men who are glad to be excused from some of the things for which they pay, others would most jubilantly take their place were they not debarred from doing so on financial grounds. Is it not a fact that, as a general rule, only the favored few are delegated to distant conferences, whereas the man who most needs the inspiration of these gatherings is rarely privileged

to attend? Were the system different, one man would not be surfeited with intellectual and inspirational feasts while a great majority of his brethren go hungry.

Is it not high time the church faced some of the facts and evils of her own vicious competitive system? While she emphasizes with increased insistency the need for applying Christ's teaching to social and industrial relationships, does she have courage to attack the economic wrongs of her own life? Would she not be in a better position to appeal to the conscience of the business world were she first to set her own house in order?

Effective permanent reform of any great magnitude is seldom the achievement of a single brain. Public sentiment must first be inflamed to the point where it will no longer tolerate conditions calling for redress. This invariably involves years of informative agitation. But even after the public conscience has been sufficiently aroused to demand action, it may take equally as many years of constructive work on the part of numerous coöperating minds to evolve a scheme which will make possible a satisfactory adjustment of all interests involved. War supplies an extreme example of the long-drawn-out process of reform. The creation of a public conscience sufficiently sensitive to demand its abolition has proven a slow process, involving many decades of passionate agitation. How long it will take to

evolve a plan, acceptable to those most concerned and adequate to rid the world of warfare, remains to be seen.

No suggestion has been made toward eliminating these deplorable evils. One reason is that the preliminary task is to direct attention to an economic situation in Protestantism which hitherto has elicited scant public interest. The purpose of this discussion is to focus the thought on an intolerable condition. Until the Protestant public realizes the far-reaching evils of the present competitive system any solution offered would unquestionably share the fate of all premature effort.

II

OTHER DIFFICULTIES

It cannot be too often reiterated that thousands of Protestants have satisfactorily succeeded in the adjustment of their faith to modern knowledge. Scholarship has enhanced for this class the value of Scripture, bringing beauty and harmony to whole tracts which once were meaningless or marred by contradictions. Science has disclosed a universe which has intensified their sense of religious wonderment and adoration. These, therefore, rejoice in a stronger and securer faith because of the wider horizons and saner evaluations made possible by

modern research. Nor have the loyalties of this class been affected by their changed outlook. But there are some other facts to be frankly faced before the church could effectively overcome the negative apathy and positive disaffection of the age. An adequate knowledge of the strength and nature of an opponent or of opposing forces is invariably invaluable. There is seldom anything to be gained, and often much to be lost, by refusal to reckon with facts however disagreeable they may be.

Some protest against the nature and meagerness of the church's spiritual message. The pope once addressed an audience of pilgrims and declared: "Europe is full of men who hate the church. Be not deceived. It is not her doctrines they hate; it is her morals." This indictment is only partially true, for there are many intelligent, highly respectable people, who have ceased to manifest interest in the church, not because of its exacting ethical demands, but because they have failed to find in its ministry a helpful and challenging message. The phenomenon of modern religious cults bears abundant testimony to widespread dissatisfaction with the church's evangel. Modern cults have drawn their followers almost exclusively from those keenly sensitive to spiritual needs which neither orthodoxy nor liberalism has been able to meet.

In this connection two curious facts may be noted. While American Protestantism has busied itself seek-

ing to convert the East to Christianity, Occultism, of many brands, has been making obvious inroads into American religious life. What is even more curious is the incongruity that so often characterizes modern exchanges of faith. Educated people will denounce the church because of the absurdity of some of its tenets of faith, only to embrace unreservedly beliefs equally as absurd. A case in point is Professor Floyd L. Darrow's *Miracles*. Professor Darrow argues his case against Biblical miracles by citing parallels to them from that vast and growing volume of literature dealing with the beliefs of primitive people. Having satisfied himself that such beliefs reflect the race's childhood stage of mental development, characterized by ignorance and credulity, and having severely berated modern intelligence for clinging to outworn creeds, he seriously recommends to his intelligent readers the cult of Rosicrucianism. He expresses his conviction that "no other system of religious philosophy so adequately explains life as we find it," in comparison with which Christianity "is hopelessly inadequate as a philosophy of life as it is." [2] Surely anyone who believes in etheric bodies, the astral sense, existence on superphysical planes, and reincarnations should scarcely be expected to raise any serious protest against a few innocent angels appearing to a few ignorant ancients. If the Rosicrucian philosophy, why not

[2] Darrow, *Miracles*, pp. 145–152.

Spiritualism? If Spiritualism, why not animism? If animism, why not any vagary? Indeed, there are not a few intelligent people who are leaving the church because they are dissatisfied with its message, only to be attracted by cults which advocate conceptions far more fantastic than the weirdest superstitions of the Middle Ages.

There is another class who stand aloof from organized religion convinced that the church is not making any notable contribution to the problems of the age. The charges include the church's attempt to curtail personal liberty; its inadequacy to deal constructively with industrial, international, and racial conflicts; its habitual opposition to new ideas; its inability to impart instruction adequate for moral guidance; its readiness to render unqualified and zealous support to the nation's wars, irrespective of their justification or aims, once war has been declared; its partiality and undue obsequiousness to wealth in the ordering of its message and policies. "It is my conviction," wrote Herbert Parrish in a recent article, "that the sooner Protestantism disappears from American life the better. Its narrow sectarian spirit, fostering division, incapable of a large synthesis of values, of unity, unfits it to represent our national religious life. Its differences of polity and doctrine, of forms and customs, do not justify the expense of its duplication of effort and upkeep. It does not answer to the deep needs of human

nature. As a moral guide it is superficial, depending on the exterior force of state legislation to effect the redemption of the race. As mystical experience it is sentimental, without intelligence, and with narrow vision. As a teaching force it is vague, negative and uncertain. As an organization it is illogical and chaotic."[3] This is one of many similar indictments flung at the church during recent years. But whatever evidence or counter-arguments may be advanced in refutation of these accusations, it remains true that numerous Protestants have lost all faith in the church's leadership and consider its influence in the life of our day too negligible to warrant their loyalty and support.

There is a third class whose mood, bred of fear and bordering on intolerance, constitutes one of the curious phenomena of the times. It is a mood at once prevalent and tense, impatient for action and fearful of the results of inaction. One cause of this misgiving is due to the disproportionate growth of the Catholic population in America during the current century. The nation's personnel has undergone considerable change during the last few decades. "Previous to 1890, nearly all the immigrants who entered [America] came from countries of Northern Europe. It has been claimed that as high as ninety per cent came from Teutonic and Celtic coun-

[3] "The Break-up of Protestantism," *The Atlantic Monthly*, March, 1927, p. 303.

tries, and were, accordingly, almost of the same blood as the early settlers; but since 1890 the character of our immigration has changed, so that since that time nearly seventy per cent have come from non-Teutonic countries, such as Russia, Austria-Hungary, Italy and Greece."[4] Several objections have been raised against this new type of immigrant, chief among them being the following: (1) Whereas the older class of immigrant came from countries where systems of government similar to our own are known so that they readily adapted themselves to the customs and legal demands of their adopted land, the new immigrant, ignorant of, and indifferent to, the requirements made of him, has neither respect nor regard for the customs and laws of the land of his adoption. It is maintained that such an attitude makes for lawlessness, and that it menaces the reign of order and the authority of government. This latter class of immigrant is, therefore, held responsible for most of the disorder and unrest of the hour. (2) The later immigrant is found to be more prolific than those of pure American stock, and able to live under conditions which would spell our own doom in a single generation. Wiggam,[5] among a number of other recent writers, has gone into this question at length disclosing the enervating low birth rate which has charac-

[4] Ellwood, *Sociology and Modern Social Problems*, p. 202.
[5] *The New Decalogue of Science: Our Family Tree.*

terized the descendants of the original American stock. The greater fecundity on the part of the immigrants will, at the present ratio of increase, place them, within a few generations, in a position of numerical supremacy. Naturally, the prospect is not hailed with any degree of satisfaction by Protestants of Puritan blood. Some of the chief things feared from the numerical increase of the new immigrant are, the biological consequences of cross-breeding,[6] the lowering of the present standard of living, the reins of government passing into the hands of those of opposite political philosophy to our own, and a religious strife which would be inevitable. (3) Whereas the majority of the former class of immigrant shared the religious faith of the early settlers, the later immigrant has come from Catholic countries, and, naturally, continues his allegiance to Rome in his newly acquired home. Early American history is not easily forgotten. Considerable pride is felt as the sturdy qualities of the Pilgrim Fathers are recalled. Imagination seeks to grasp the sacrifices made, privations borne, and endurance painfully sustained, because of their fidelity to those Protestant principles, upon which the superstructure of the nation's life has been built. For four centuries Americans have gloried in their inestimable heritage of religious liberty. Owing to this historical background and the fact that until 1890 the

[6] The reader is referred to Albert E. Wiggam's books.

greater percentage of those emigrating to America shared the faith and convictions of the early settlers, it was taken for granted that since America has always been predominantly Protestant it would forever remain such. Then came the great influx of Catholic immigrants who, owing to their greater fecundity, will, it is reasoned, within a few generations challenge Protestant supremacy and power. When, at length, the facts were with dramatic suddenness thrust upon the notice of the American public, evidences of uneasiness and fear were not wanting. An appeal was made to Protestant consciousness to check "The Catholic Menace"—a slogan intended to challenge Protestant loyalty and to inflame its divided ranks into concerted action.

Another cause of this misgiving, especially among serious-thinking Protestants, is the obvious moral trend of the times. Sufficient has already been said to suggest the range and nature of the new thoughts which have definitely influenced the outlook and appraisals of the age. With the collapse of traditional theology there has been a widespread revolt against existing ethical standards and restrictions, which the older theological conceptions did much to establish, sanction, and enforce. Morality itself has not escaped the questionings of our own generation. Men are today fully aware of the close connection between ethical standards and the evolution of the moral consciousness. The differences and fluctu-

ations known to moral demands are accounted for as due to the accidents of time and place. The morality of one age is the immorality of another, and what one people considers unsinful another condemns as unethical. Nor is it safe to ignore the contribution which modern psychology has made to the molding of public opinion on the question of human behavior. Transmitted tendencies, environmental influences, educational methods, early ideology, with their concomitants of subconsciousness, "repressions," "complexes," "censors," etc., have for many reduced conduct to an irresponsible automatic mechanism. In possession of a mass of new knowledge respecting human behavior and the conditional nature of morality, the age has laid claim to the right of self-determination. That they cannot act otherwise, because of the mechanistic nature of behavior, is often made the basis of excuse for baseness —notwithstanding the obvious incongruity of predetermined creatures laying claim to self-determination. Those norms, conventions, and customs that tend to curb the free expression of natural impulses are denounced as hindrances to normal growth. All recourse to compulsion or repression is condemned as unworthy of intelligent people. To feel, to experience, to express, seems to be the dominant demand of modern life. Consciousness is rated higher than either character or achievement. To run the whole gamut of sensations is accepted as the one

objective worthy of sacrifice and endeavor. Discipline is tabooed as insidious and enervating. Sooner or later, this demand for untrammeled freedom runs counter to most of the customs, institutions, and standards of the land. These are denounced as created by weaklings, and enforced in the name of law and order for the benefit of the few. The problem play and the sex novel have taken up the popular clamor of the age for self-realization and have done much toward stimulating and encouraging it.

A freedom undreamed of by previous generations, but now claimed as a legitimate right, has made for an irresponsibility and wantonness which earlier social restrictions and moral standards were able to keep in check. Among a mass of other evidence, the following is cited in justification for alarm: a noticeable waning of all sense of parental responsibility with a corresponding growth of disregard for parental authority; speedily contracted and easily dissolved marriages, accompanied by increasing laxity in sexual relations; a deplorable dearth of loyalty, decline of moral qualities, and insensibility to moral obligations; a hectic demand for new sensations and continuous excitement with its corresponding unwillingness to accept whatever involves tedious, strenuous, exacting application; an increasing disregard for all authority with its corollaries of lawlessness, crime, and insecurity; an individualism which is jeopardizing established order

and inherited freedom. Nor does this by any means exhaust the list of charges brought against the age. But however long or short the catalogue of evils cited in evidence of the downward drift of the times, or however trivial and groundless may be many of the items included, it is generally conceded that the present trend is ominous. "For our century is cursed by a strange paradox of fate: in scientific thought we see before us unknown paths leading probably to splendid goals; yet in the world of morals we are beggared even of honesty. On the one hand we face the awful menace of the heights of human effort; on the other we seem utterly unable to drag ourselves free from the slime-pit of evil." [7] "No one can fail, I think, to observe the consequent lack of poise, of sanity, of balance, in the moral judgments of the times. There is no lack of moral sentiment among us; there is a terrible lack of moral judgment." [8] "One fears for the future of mankind. The most ominous sign is not the fact that the cook, the servant-girl, and lackey want the same pleasures which not long ago were the monopoly of the rich alone; but the fact that all, all without exception, rich and idle as well as poor and industrious, seek and demand daily amusements, gaiety, excitement, and keen impressions—demand it all as something without which

[7] Willcocks *Between the Old World and the New,* pp. 143, 144.
[8] *The Century Magazine,* March, 1924, p. 721.

life is impossible, which may not be denied them."[9] Only those who stubbornly refuse to face facts will hold the present prevalent indifference to religion a negligible thing. It is scarcely possible to overestimate the greatness of the change in recent years with regard to the attitude of multitudes toward matters related to religion. With many it is a condition of growing indifference; in others, a positive revolt not only against organized religion, but against everything that tends to restrict individual freedom. The revolt has taken the form of a demand for self-expression, free from all social and religious restraints. This is seen particularly in youths who claim the right to determine their own destiny. The Christian viewpoint and scale of values have been rejected, while individuality has asserted itself to a point of perilous selfishness. Discipline, restraints, and authority have been denounced and defied as so many childish hindrances to life's fulfillment.

There is, moreover, considerable disagreement where to lay the responsibility for existing conditions. The institutions of the home, church, school, industry, government, are, in turn, berated for their imperfections. One fact, however, is generally admitted. For some time the religious education of youth has been sadly neglected. The family altar has

[9] Eugene Markov, quoted by Mark Sullivan in *Our Times*, Vol. I, p. 371.

been almost universally abandoned while the family pew has, with rare exceptions, disappeared. The younger generation is woefully ignorant of the contents of the Bible, while devotional and worship habits have ceased to be cultivated in any general sense, at least among Protestants. The Sunday is more often used as a holiday than a holy day set apart for purposes of rest and worship. The emotional life of modern Protestant youth is being nourished on the husks of sex novels, sensuous, sensational newspaper scandals, jazz music, and Wild West films. They have practically discarded the stronger nutrition imparted to, and assimilated by, an earlier generation, such as Christian idealism, meditation, and service, with a practical, working knowledge of that incomparable compendium of ethical teaching and spiritual inspiration and strength—the Bible. However existing conditions may be explained, the present trend has proved provocative of considerable uneasiness.

"Fear of the Lord," so the Book of Psalms informs us, "is the beginning of wisdom." There is a fear however, which, instead of being conducive to wisdom, generates intolerance, persecution and warfare. As long as the respective numbers of two opposing bodies are decidedly disproportionate, the majority can afford to exercise tolerance. When two opponents begin to approximate equal strength, those in power are inclined vigorously to

assert their authority and to resent any infringement on their rights. Like some wild animal finding itself gradually driven to bay, their dormant ferocity begins to assert itself. At such times reason is invariably paralyzed. The call for quick and decisive action allows no time to investigate causes or to weigh decisions. Evidence is not lacking that such is the present temper of a large section of American Protestantism. Groups have been organized, actions entertained and executed, reforms advocated, which disclose evident signs of being the ill-conceived products of fear. Far from solving any problem, they but aggravate the situation by inspiring suspicion and hatred, which must inevitably lead to intolerance and strife. Fear is the beginning of wisdom only when it leads to, and results in, effectual contrition, careful and thorough investigation, accurate adjustments, intensified and intelligent devotion. A careful analysis of existing conditions and painstaking and sympathetic research for accurate knowledge of contributing causes make it imperative that foundations must be laid for a new consecration and an enduring reformation. But there's the rub. Privilege and power make their own exactions. Their continuance depends on rigorous vigilance, discipline, and self-denial.

It is one thing, for instance, to succeed in placing the Bible in the public schools—a panacea, by the way, which meets with scant favor among those

whose early education was received in institutions of other lands, where the reading of the Bible was part of the daily curriculum. But what beneficial purpose will the accomplishment serve so long as parents, by their own negligence and indifference, make it evident that they do not consider it worth while to peruse its pages with any degree of habitual frequency? Moreover, if its contents are not made the basis of devotional life, thereby proving a source of inspiration and strength, and its teachings are not applied to the child's daily conduct, the smattering of knowledge gained by the reading of it in the public schools will prove of negligible value. It is one of numerous instances where solution and lasting improvement will come only by way of a Protestant consciousness sufficiently strong to command the necessary vigilance, discipline, and self-denial which the continuance of power and privilege exacts. Otherwise, the advantages gained for, and transmitted to, the present generation by the efforts and sacrifices of the past will be lost.

One of the most hopeful signs of the hour is the evident uneasiness which the present trends have aroused. Only when a people are utterly insensitive to impending danger is there real reason for despair. A situation that makes men painfully conscious of the need of action is never hopeless. Even criticism is welcome because it testifies to an impatience with irritating defects which it feverishly wishes to

eradicate. The disquiet caused by certain prevailing tendencies has already borne fruit in the wholesome publicity it has provoked. In numerous cases it has caused lethargy to give place to active interest. Men who had grown indifferent to religion have applied themselves to a serious reëxamination of its claims. The church has been forced to face its deficiencies in the light of adverse criticism and actual conditions. All this is encouraging. The age is at least alive to its follies and to the dangers which continuance of its present course involves. No small number of the best trained intellects of the land are grappling with the problems of human conduct in all its complex and baffling phases. Whatever benefits may accrue from their cumulative efforts, the fact that the situation is commanding so much serious and thoughtful attention is truly most hopeful.

Chapter Four

COMPETING ORGANIZATIONS

THE modern fraternity is a strictly Protestant movement. In making this statement the writer is not concerned with the legends, romances, and ancient mysteries of some of the older fraternal orders. He is thinking of the place they at present occupy in American life. The Catholic church is not seriously affected by fraternities. Invariably, any secret societies to which its communicants belong are definitely aligned with the policy of the church. It has not encouraged, but rather sought to restrain, its members from participation in non-Catholic fraternities; and it has so far succeeded that the number of its communicants belonging to them is negligible. It is in this sense that the modern fraternity is a strictly Protestant movement and is supported almost exclusively by Protestants. Consequently, no attempt to arrive at an accurate appraisal of modern Protestantism can ignore the effect of fraternities on the life of the American churches.

During recent years a number of fraternal clubs have come into existence. Their primary purpose is to foster the fraternal spirit among the business and

professional men of the community. The means adopted for the realization of this end is a weekly or semimonthly informal luncheon when good fellowship is relied on to break down all divisive barriers. Brotherhood, charity, coöperation, and service are some of the inspiring keywords which these clubs share in common. Since they prohibit the advocacy or even the discussion of party politics and sectarianism, not infrequently Jew, Protestant, and Roman Catholic are found fraternizing at these luncheons. Nevertheless, the fact remains that the creation and continuance of these clubs invariably testify to Protestant enterprise and support. In this sense, they, too, may be regarded as Protestant movements.

To turn the church's batteries and open fire on the fraternal movements of the country is quite unnecessary, and would prove the height of folly. They are too strong, popular, and well established to be seriously affected by any hostilities directed against them by the Protestant clergy. Moreover, the fact that many of the church's leaders are definitely aligned with these various fraternal organizations places all such hostility beyond the range of immediate possibility. Nor do the facts warrant antagonism. Their many merits are generally conceded. Their aims are admirable; their influence, as a social and moral force, fostering goodwill, molding character, and inspiring service, is salutary and

highly commendable. Nevertheless, they are attended by certain repercussions that are far from assuring. It is necessary, therefore, because of the extent of their influence, to take them into account if an accurate appraisal is to be made of the Protestantism of our day.

To say the least, fraternities and fraternal clubs have made for dissipation of energy, interest, and financial resources. Were it merely one or two extraneous organizations by which Protestantism is confronted, the situation would not be nearly so inimical. But one of the modern tendencies of the Protestant world is toward overorganization. This may be a natural consequence of the Protestant emphasis on the value of the individual and the individual's right to the free exercise of private judgment. However this may be, Protestant effectiveness is today considerably weakened through multiplicity of effort and organization. Not only are there numerous lodges and fraternal clubs, but most of the orders have encouraged higher degrees or associated lodges which demand a duplication of dues, meetings, ritual, rules, etc. Moreover, there are no end of clubs and societies besides those that can be classified as strictly fraternal—civic, political, reform, educational. Many local churches have likewise succumbed to the same hectic aggressiveness in organizing similar groupings among their own members.

It is obvious that the force and effectiveness of

Protestantism are impaired by this multiplicity of interests and activities of its adherents. It is not sectarianism alone that is responsible for Protestant weakness. Many a Protestant who deprecates denominational rivalry contributes to the orgy he condemns by supporting half a dozen rival societies whose professed aims are similar and competitive. Most Protestant clergymen have in their congregations those who are engaged practically every day in the week in some lodge or club activity, or at least would be if they were true to their obligations. Needless to say, such hectic living is of questionable advantage to those so engaged and a serious handicap to the cause of organized religion. Individual time, finance, and energy are spread over a wide area of interests. The weakness attending such dissipation is perhaps most in evidence in the smaller community, where the need of eliminating rival fraternal organizations is as urgent as is the federation of its churches. For the expenditure of these numerous, struggling societies is out of all proportion to the service they render. Also, the burden of responsibility they exact is invariably borne by the same conscientious minority. A concentration of forces would make for a strength and effectiveness which existing conditions render impossible. Truly modern American Protestantism suffers from duplication of organization and effort.

A still more serious setback, due to overorganiza-

tion, is the detrimental effect on the loyalty of Protestants to their churches. It stands to reason that a man who belongs to several lodges and clubs is unable to give full measure of devotion to them all. Active participation thus gives place to spasmodic attendance at their communications, and it frequently happens that he ceases entirely to share their fellowship and work. If any loyalty is shown it is generally in response to the pressure of the appeal of some particular association or program. Should none of the lodges or clubs prove capable of holding him in this way, he will drop them all, except, perhaps, for an occasional visit. Nor are his fellow members perturbed by his absence. Once they find themselves incapable of commanding his presence at their meetings or enlisting him in their activities, they are content to carry him on their membership roll, provided he does not fail to pay his annual dues. His absence, while perhaps deplored by the faithful, is not held against him. Active participation in its organized life is not held obligatory. Nor can it be, owing to the rivalry of similar organizations. To make participation compulsory would necessitate many of them going out of existence. All they can ask is that its members continue their financial support, trusting to the devoted to carry on its work. Hence financial obligation is made the cardinal test of loyalty. If its members do patronize the lodge by their presence,

they may be thanked, as in one order they actually are, for their attendance and invited to be present, not necessarily at the next but at some future meeting, according to their convenience. Loyalty resting on such a flimsy basis is virtually a farce. It is little wonder, therefore, that hosts of fraternity members in good standing rarely attend lodge meetings and frequently absent themselves for years.

When men grow insensible to obligations, to the performance of which they are solemnly pledged, irresponsibility must necessarily characterize their other relations. Duties are accepted or refused thoughtlessly. They inspire no sense of a personal responsibility that is binding and imperative in its demands. Loyalty, fidelity, reliability are qualities essential to the stability of society and vital to its morality. These give place to caprice and the insipid claims of convenience. "A man will lay down his head," comments the shrewd Thackeray in *Pendennis,* "or peril his life for his honor, but let us be shy how we ask him to give up his ease or his heart's desire." When whole tracts of society habituate themselves in assuming obligations to which they refuse to be bound, the reaction is felt sooner or later in the realms of morality and religion. It would be difficult to say to what extent the moral laxity of the hour is due to such a widespread trifling with obligations. But this much is clear, that men cannot trifle with moral law in any particular without the

violation affecting the whole circle of their lives. Loyalty and fidelity are closely related to honesty, truthfulness, and integrity. When consciousness of the imperative nature of voluntary obligations becomes deadened, the resulting moral insensibility is bound to jeopardize all other relations, so that moral laxity becomes the rule rather than the exception.

Consider, therefore, such an attitude of unreliability with reference to the obligation of Protestants to their churches. Vows taken when admitted into the church are soon forgotten. They are treated merely as a ritualistic detail of the ceremony of admission, not to be taken too seriously. Attendance at public worship is no more obligatory than attendance at lodge meetings. Habit, convenience, loyalty, caprice, conviction, are among the factors which determine the individual's attendance at, or absence from, public worship. The same factors influence the individual's response to the challenge of duty. A task may be refused, or assumed and as readily abandoned, without any qualms of conscience or any suspicion of disloyalty being aroused. "We don't have to do what our minister tells us to do," was the triumphant retort of a Protestant lady to a Catholic lady's narration of an improvement successfully undertaken by her local church, of which she was justifiably proud. Duties which should be taken seriously weigh lightly on Protestant consciousness. Too often, as in the case of men's relation to their

fraternities and clubs, financial support is accepted as the cardinal criterion of loyalty. The deplorable and appalling thing is that such a test meets with general approval; at least it seldom calls forth any serious expression of disapproval.

Another factor making for Protestant disintegration is the tendency on the part of many Protestants to substitute the lodge or fraternal club for the church. The simplicity and significance of the few principles, generally conceded religious, to which they are asked to subscribe, such as brotherhood, charity, coöperation, service, and the liberty allowed them to formulate their private religious views, appeal to them. This appeal is the more attractive in contrast with the numerous strange, conflicting creedal requirements of sectarianism, which are often viewed as absurdly trivial or unreasonable. And yet the writer has on more than one occasion heard a man, who prides himself on his scientific outlook, never losing an opportunity to pour opprobrium on the absurdity of Christian dogmas, seriously reciting a ritual as antiquated and unreasonable, if taken literally, as any of the creeds to which he so vehemently objects. It is not to be denied, however, that the substitution of a few broad, essential principles for the baffling creedal demands of the church as a basis of admission into its membership does appeal to the modern, practical American of scientific training and outlook.

The tendency of the fraternity man to displace the church by the lodge is further strengthened by the religious nature of some of the lodge's furnishings, symbolism, ritual, and customs. The presence of a chaplain, prayers, the Bible, and the fact that the degree work is generally founded on some Biblical incident, are suggestive of, if not conducive to, a religious atmosphere. It is also the custom of most American fraternities to attend church in a body once a year. The custom eloquently serves more than one purpose. It serves to advertise the local lodge as to its numerical strength and the high grade of the personnel of its members. It also bears evidence to the religious basis upon which it rests and the religious nature of its work—features to which the clergyman in charge of the service is expected to bear unstinted testimony. Preferring the ritual, freedom, and fellowship of the fraternity to that of the church, and convinced that the principles which their lodge seeks to propagate are in harmony with the teachings of Jesus, many lodge members feel no qualms about absenting themselves from public worship. As a matter of fact, they may not reappear inside of a church for another twelve months, except perhaps to attend a funeral or wedding. Even in the case of death the tendency is to escape the official services of the clergy, for most fraternities are well equipped and qualified to bury their own dead. It is the cumulative force of these

and other factors and influences which makes many Protestants satisfied with the fellowship and program of lodges and fraternal clubs as a means of expressing their religious faith and idealism.

It is scarcely credible that anyone would claim that the functions of the church and the lodge or fraternal club are identical. The most casual acquaintance with their respective programs and aims would contradict such an assumption. Although supposedly welcome in the church, a large percentage of the world's population is disqualified from entering most of the secret orders and fraternal clubs and sharing their benefits. Nor do these organizations make any definite attempt to train the "unfit" that they may qualify to enter their association. The task of civilizing and Christianizing the disqualified is left to the church. Its business is also to inculcate the youth of the land with those moral principles and values which will enable them to meet the ethical standards prerequisite to membership in lodges and fraternal clubs. The latter often disseminate their principles by way of exemplary practice; but only those who can qualify for their fellowships are privileged to obtain the benefits of direct association. It is also to be noted that often the best workers and most loyal and reliable members in these extraneous organizations received their training in the church; seldom is the reverse true. It is invariably the church that qualifies men

for membership in the lodge and fraternal club; rarely are the church's most ardent workers and supporters the product of these fraternal associations.

Nor is the Gospel of the Helping Hand, as taught and practiced by most lodges and fraternal clubs, in its broadest application, sufficient to meet the demands of the ever increasing complexities of modern society. Many people have the idea that all the religion they need, or that the world needs, is that which requires them to live decently, to play square with their fellow men in all dealings, and to help those in distress. Commendable as are morality, integrity, and benevolence, there are other considerations more significant. Ignoring them is like mopping up the floor instead of turning off the spigot, as Bishop Charles D. Williams of Michigan used to say. We need to eliminate the root causes that produce impoverishment, war, vice, and vicious contributing evils. What constitutes a square deal in business transactions, in wages paid and labor given, in partisan zeal and political action, in the distribution of sectional resources, and in national tariffs and international treaties? Consider those forces universally operative that make for impoverishment of life. Lack of dollars is but one type of poverty. Certain existing conditions are forever sapping manhood and womanhood of their finer qualities, making impossible the normal moral, and often mental and

physical, development of youth, leaving thousands by the highways of life wounded, incapacitated, impotent, and enslaved. Before poverty, war, ignorance, exploitation, oppression, and moral menaces to youth can be eradicated from modern society, a public conscience must be created which shall prove sufficiently vigorous to demand and carry out the needed reforms and bring redress. This the church, rather than the lodge or fraternal club, explicitly attempts to do. The very restrictions under which lodges operate as to membership and the secrecy of their deliberations, as well as their refusal to take part in drastic economic, political, social, or ethical changes, totally disqualify them from becoming vital forces in molding public opinion and in determining public policies.

But why belabor the comparison further? There are whole spheres of influence and service which lodges and fraternal clubs never touch, and which are occupied, if at all, by the church. On the other hand, it is but fair to acknowledge those weaknesses in organized religion which made possible the fraternity, and to accredit the contribution which the secret society and fraternal club make to our modern life. Several lodges were called into being to satisfy a social instinct, on a basis of fellowship free from all theological dogmatism and sectarian strife, emphasizing the broad, vital religious princi-

ples of comradeship and helpfulness. It is not surprising that popular approval should have responded so widely to this appeal, nor that it should continue to respond to it. We can further understand why some Protestants prefer the nonsectarian freedom of the lodge to the creedal exactions of the church. It is also patent that the lodge and fraternal club are making a definite contribution to the lives of hosts of their members; their ideals are commendable; their teaching wholesome; their influence salutary; and their service extensive.

An additional word should be said regarding a characteristic phase of modern life which bears directly upon both ecclesiastical and fraternal relationships, namely, loyalty to obligations assumed. Its obvious absence is striking at the very vitals of morality and religion. Increasing insensibility to vows solemnly taken is proving both demoralizing and disintegrating. Were men to assume no obligations which knowingly they are unable to keep, fraternities, no less than the churches, would profit thereby. It would lend weight, meaning, and sacredness to all initiatory pledges. It would go far toward solving the problem of overorganization. Elimination would result in the greater numerical strength and efficiency of what remains. Nor would the burden of responsibility prove so irksome for those who do take their obligations seriously. Its greatest benefit, however, would be seen in its salutary reac-

tion on all other relationships of life. The stabilizing sanctions of an earlier day would again come into their own; moral laxity and turpitude would be less condoned; honesty, truth, and integrity would be further exalted.

Chapter Five

WHERE AUTHORITY ULTIMATELY RESTS

THE tendency to seek guidance in authority of some kind is not uncommon. Men feel their positions to be more secure and their arguments more valid when recognized authority is behind them. A lawyer seeks to strengthen his plea by citing the largest possible number of decisions handed down by higher tribunals on cases identical with the one in hand. A statesman will advocate a policy or course of action on the strength of the views of some earlier leader renowned for clarity of vision and wealth of wisdom. Especially when seeking favorable recognition for what appears to be a very questionable innovation, justification is sought on the grounds of its having elsewhere been successfully tried or on the authority of some accepted master of the subject. It is characteristic of human nature to rely on authority of some kind for the regulation and direction of both its thought and conduct.

Up to the sixteenth century the church was the sole recognized authority of religious life. Men accepted their religious beliefs from this institution without question. The age of critical inquiry had not yet arrived; although there were exceptions,

since no great movement bursts suddenly into bloom. The widespread intellectual revolt of the sixteenth century against ecclesiastical autocracy had many precursors. Men like Wyclif and Huss protested against the rulings of Rome, and claimed a right to certain religious privileges otherwise denied to themselves and to all Christian people. The light of religious liberty was never utterly extinguished, but it was not until the Reformation that the flickering torches succeeded in igniting one general conflagration. Papal authority was not only questioned but was repudiated by an impressive percentage of Catholic communicants. Protestantism had come into being. Henceforth the rulings of Rome would carry no weight for Protestant Christians.

The Western world, however, long accustomed to autocracy, was not prepared at the time of the Reformation to discard all authority. Its restraints were felt to be indispensable to the order and stability of society. It was not the authoritarian principle in religion against which the leaders of the Reformation protested. Having satisfied themselves that many of the decrees and assumptions of the church would not stand critical investigation, they urged an exchange of the authority of the church for that of Scripture which they held was the original source of all religious authority. But the new authority was destined to no better fate than the one discarded. Attention has already been drawn to the harvest of

sects which resulted from Protestantism's appeal to the Bible as a final court of authority on questions of religious belief and behavior. Its mandatory power was further discredited by the all too common practice of seeking to justify conduct, often of a doubtful and even vicious nature, by the proof-text method of argument. Slavery, war, poverty, vice, oppression, retaliation were respectively advocated or justified on the ground that Scripture sanctioned its existence and practice. In our own time, however, Biblical criticism and science have undermined for most educated Protestants a sublime confidence in the Bible as the final and infallible authority.

Where then shall men turn for those imperatives of conduct potent enough to command universal recognition and obedience? Or is the human race sufficiently developed that it may safely be entrusted to direct its own course independent of any authority other than that of the individual's own judgment and conscience? Human nature is such that the generality of men shirk the disagreeable, even when most convinced of its need and the advantage accruing from its acceptance. How many children would attend school with the same regularity as they now do were the choice left to their personal caprice? How much money would enter into our city, county, state, and national treasuries were payments left to the free will of the indi-

vidual taxpayer? How much lower would be the standard of private conduct were the pressure and authority of public opinion removed? How much of our goodness is of free will and how much of necessity? Freed from the external authorities of church and Bible, to what can men turn for the safeguarding and enforcement of those moral and religious sanctions and demands upon which society so largely depends for its stability and well-being?

In his *Psychology of Religious Beliefs,* Professor J. B. Pratt draws attention to the fact that there are three stages through which people pass in the development of their religious beliefs, namely, credulity, critical inquiry, and religious feeling. Credulity is one of the commonest traits of child life. A child seldom questions the veracity of its parent's statements. This implicit trust in the truth of what it is told leads it to accept its religious ideas with the same credulous simplicity as it does any other instruction or information imparted to it. It may occasionally ask a few questions, but any weak doubts sporadically expressed are easily dispersed. A noticeable change, however, takes place in the child's attitude to external authority once the teen age is reached. The child is learning to think for itself. Doubts begin to take possession of its growing, inquiring mind. When certain statements are imparted to it, which fail to harmonize with the facts of observation and experience, the first signs of

intellectual rebellion appear. And once authority is found false in a single detail all authority is viewed askance. Having been found false in one particular, how can authority be trusted in other matters, and, if untrue, why should it be binding? The credulity stage is passed, the critical faculty awakened, and a fight for intellectual freedom begun. Reverence for, and obedience to, authority are on the wane. But the process in the development of our religious beliefs does not end here. Another stage is at length reached, that of religious feeling. The teaching drilled into us in childhood is not easily forgotten nor suppressed. Was it not Cardinal Newman who said, "Give me the children until they reach their teens and you can do with them what you like after that"? "It has taken a lifetime," once remarked an elderly lady in the writer's hearing, "for me to unlearn what I learned as a child." Some of the teachings of our childhood days are "the ghosts that will not down"; they persist in haunting us throughout our remaining days. The critical period does not destroy religious beliefs though it may change them almost beyond recognition. As we emerge into mature life we find the religious instruction of an earlier age reappearing in the form of religious feeling, which no reasoning can destroy. It may not be unreasonable, but it is for the most part suprareasonable.

Nor is the history of the religious life of the

Western world very dissimilar to that of the individual. To speak of the first sixteen centuries as the childhood period of the church's life would not be far beside the mark. During this period men accepted their beliefs at the hands, and on the authority, of the church. The Western world was passing through its credulous stage of development. A few individuals and small groups questioned the church's authority, but the masses credulously accepted and tacitly obeyed what Catholicism taught and demanded. It was not until the Reformation that the critical faculty was fully aroused and a widespread intellectual revolt begun. Once the spirit of free inquiry had asserted itself and had made its first conquest in its conflict with authority, the way was open for untrammeled investigation and unlimited expression. Adolescent skepticism was in evidence. Nothing escaped its critical sense; nothing proved too sacred to debar its bold iconoclastic intrusion. The sixteenth century revolt against ecclesiastical authority, followed by the religious demands and theological opinions of the seventeenth century, paved the way for the rationalism of the eighteenth century and the materialism of the nineteenth century. The critical spirit of adolescence, with its endless misgivings, questions, and unbeliefs, was here in evidence; skepticism was the order of the day.

It would be premature and unwarranted on the

basis of fact to assert that Protestantism today is emerging out of its adolescent period into a more settled, less critical, and maturer state. Notwithstanding the destructive criticism of the last few centuries, however, religious sympathies and sentiments have not been entirely destroyed. Those religious beliefs inculcated into the life of the Western world during its childhood period, the intellectual misgivings of later centuries have failed to eradicate. While they may not carry the weight of conviction which they inspired in a previous generation, they are still capable of commanding sufficient sentiment to preserve them from oblivion. But is this "feeling" anything more than a "survival" of those religious ideas taught the childhood of the race which, instead of increasing in force and vitality with the lapse of years, is slowly but surely losing ground? "Without any hope or fear of the hereafter," writes E. Phillips Oppenheim in the symposium of English novelists bearing the caption, *My Religion,* "we should logically become a world of lunatics, yet all those forms of faith and belief which from the earliest days of history have produced a countless procession of saints and heroes, have grown fainter throughout the generations until today it really seems as though in future ages, not far removed from our own, all established forms of worship will die of sheer inanition. It is the penalty which we are paying for a larger measure of intel-

lectual comprehension, for greater inroads into the mysterious world of science, that with all such developments the primitive faith of man in God grows fainter and fainter. Centuries ago religion was an easy thing. Man believed what he felt and what he was taught. Nowadays, when the utilitarianism of a more mechanical world has destroyed to a large extent the earlier and sweeter forms of apprehension born of faith and sentiment, religion as expressed by any definite formulæ is sinking fast into the background of our lives, taking its place among the dead, beautiful things whose inspiration is past —the mythology of Greece, the pictured worship of the Egyptians.[1]

There are undoubtedly many who share Mr. Oppenheim's opinion that, because of our "larger measure of intellectual comprehension," the religious convictions of previous generations have become so devitalized as to be nothing more than so many senile sentiments, the rapidly waning strength of which will soon reduce them to utter impotency. The attitude of hosts of American Protestants toward the Bible and the church might be cited as warranting this conclusion. While men may still hold the Bible in reverence, and sentimentalize about its ethical and spiritual value, daily meditation of its contents is fast falling into disuse. Daily newspapers, popular magazines, and current literature,

[1]Page 40 f.

chiefly fiction, have very largely displaced the Bible on the library table. One conspicuous effect of this waning interest in the Bible and the passing of the practice of its daily meditation is seen in the growing difficulty to secure teachers for Protestant Sunday schools; many Protestants, otherwise well qualified for the work, feel themselves too deficient in their knowledge of the Bible to undertake the task of teaching it to others. Moreover, there is a growing disinclination on their part to bind themselves to tasks that call for regularity of application in their execution. They believe in the value of the church —for the other fellow. They are willing to give it their financial support, but with no degree of consistency are they eager to lend the influence of their personal presence to its public worship. They concede that the church's ethical and social idealism is essential to the stability and safety of society, but they are unwilling to make the personal sacrifices necessary for the most effective appeal of its message and the execution of its program. Nowhere is the weakness of Protestant consciousness more conspicuous than here.

The Catholic makes a better showing in this respect. He willingly shares the financial obligations of his church, loyally supports its public services by his presence, and thoroughly seeks to train his children in the rudiments of religious loyalty and belief. A certain type of Protestant, on the other

hand, feels himself under no binding obligation to give to his church the undivided allegiance of a passionate devotion. Too often his interest and service are at the mercy of his caprices—whether he likes his minister, enjoys the preaching, or finds congenial company among fellow church members. When one or more of these conditions are not met, he easily succumbs to the alluring wiles of self-indulgence at the price of a disloyalty of which he is rarely conscious. Indolence, whims, convenience, and pleasure determine his conduct, rather than self-sacrificial fervor and unswerving loyalty, which alone can insure the preservation of a vigorous Protestantism.

It is not surprising, therefore, to find in certain Protestant circles a definite distrust of religious consciousness as a competent guide in matters of personal conduct. Its claims are rejected as too subjective and individualistic to lend either stability or effectiveness to its authority. The fact that the church is made up of thousands of individuals of diversified outlook and experience presumably prevents the emergence of a common consciousness that will make for unity of conviction and definiteness of purpose. The vagaries of Liberalism are cited as evidence of the incompetency of a religious consciousness to impart clear direction to the church's thinking. Even more serious has been the effect on personal conduct of the substitution of subjective

judgments for external authority. Reliance on religious consciousness is thus held responsible for the transformation of convictions into senile sentiments, and for the cultivation of moods and attitudes discussed in a previous chapter. Despite the reaction against older forms of authority, therefore, great efforts have been made in recent years to reëstablish the Bible's position as "an infallible Book," inerrant from cover to cover. These contentions have met with scant support from those familiar with the disclosures of Biblical criticism and modern science. The result has been an irreconcilable cleavage in the ranks of Protestantism.

Another movement within Protestantism aims to restore the authority formerly exercised by the church. To this end Anglo-Catholics recognize as valid those claims for the church which were repudiated by the leaders of the Reformation and their followers up to the present time, as being alien to the genius and principles of Protestant Christianity. Anglo-Catholics are no more willing than is Rome to entrust the Bible to the intelligence of the lay mind. The church is the authority, the Bible, as the product of the first members of the church, is the norm by which the church's future utterances must be judged. The assumption is that the church was instituted by Jesus to speak in his name and act in his place through an ordained priesthood which, it is asserted, has continued in unbroken succession

until our day. By means of an "apostolic succession" of regularly ordained priests, this authority has been preserved and at no time has it forfeited the power entrusted to it by its Founder and Head. It is further claimed that this heritage of power entitles the church alone to interpret Scripture, set the standard for Christian beliefs and conduct, and to administer the sacraments. It follows that these claims allow for scant personal initiative. Although the possibility of direct communion with God is not denied, its benefits are minimized. Those who remain outside the church are without the sacramental means of divine grace and without salvation. For Anglo-Catholics the church is the final and infallible authority on matters of Christian doctrine and discipline.

It is needless to say, that, in the face of such claims Protestant unity is well-nigh impossible. The historic evidence for "apostolic succession" is too slight to command general acceptance. The imposition of the present creeds as obligatory tests of membership is not convincing nor is confidence inspired by the memory of ecclesiastical supremacy. The arrogance, intolerance, and abuses of the church in the days of its greatest power scarcely encourage any desire for the restoration of its former authority. Whatever may be urged for or against Anglo-Catholicism, it is certain that the liberal and progressive wing of Protestantism will reject these

artificial demands which find slight basis in reality or hardly any warrant from history.

The insistence on religious consciousness as the chief authority for the regulation of conduct is doubtless fraught with many dangers and open to many objections. But the evidence scarcely justifies the conclusion that it is too unstable and individualistic effectively to control and direct human behavior. And it must be noted that Liberal Christians have not wholly discarded the Bible in the ordering of their thought and conduct. What they insist is that their reason shall not be made slavishly subservient to the Bible's teaching. Most Christians who have applied the scientific method to the contents of the Bible, continue to turn to its pages for inspiration and guidance. Its lofty religious ideals, especially the principle of love as depicted by Jesus in his life and death and in his teaching, have been an invaluable stimulus for the ordering of their lives. Subjective judgments are tested in the light of the teaching and spirit of Him who declared Himself to be the Light of the World. This method necessarily has a decided bearing on religious consciousness, illuminating and sensitizing it and supplying it with definite and sane direction.

But of even greater significance is the development of this very consciousness itself. May it be that the confusion and uncertainties of the hour are themselves indicative of an evolving religious con-

sciousness in search after a new set of ethical and social values, which shall not only safeguard civilization from chaos and collapse but make a definite contribution to the race's future? Benjamin Kidd, in his *Social Evolution,* gives us a picture of a person from another planet coming to earth and studying the Christian religion. Among the many strange discoveries made by such a person of the religious phenomena of our Western civilization not the least is the bitter struggle that has existed between science and religion during modern times. "Everywhere," writes Kidd, "he would find him [the Christian] clinging with the most extraordinary persistence to ideas and ideals which regulated his life under the influence of these religions, and ruthlessly punishing all those who endeavored to convince him that these conceptions were without foundation in fact. At many periods in human history also, he would have to observe that the opinion had been entertained by considerable numbers of persons, that a point had at length been reached, at which it was only a question of time, until human reason finally dispelled the belief in those unseen powers which man held in control over himself. But he would find his anticipation never realized. Dislodged from one position, the human mind, he would observe, had only taken up another of the same kind which it continued once more to hold with the same unreasoning,

dogged, and desperate persistence." [2] This testimony to the persistency of religious consciousness in the defense of its faith is at once curious and startlingly suggestive. Why should men even fight in defense of their faith, and finding themselves worsted in the struggle, take a new stand with the same dogged determination? What imperative lies behind the Liberal movement, with its eagerness to adjust faith to modern facts? Why are men not content to allow all religious forms and formulæ to die of sheer inanition? Is it possible that religious consciousness is a permanent expression of life, sharing its persistency, its undiminishing vitality and imperative force?

Religious consciousness has not escaped the evolutionary process which has left its mark so indelibly upon the rest of creation. From the viewpoint of historical development, it is now different from what it was in the early Old Testament period, or even a century ago. But the most significant thing about it is not the radical changes which have marked its evolution, but the fact that it has persisted through all the changes of human development. Confronted by a constantly changing environment, it has borne evidence of its inherent power to make those adaptations necessary to its preservation. Nor is there reason to believe that it will be impotent to make the essential adaptations necessitated by recent changes in men's way of viewing the universe. Religious

[2] Pages 98, 99.

consciousness has always appeared weakest at the time of great adjustments, a condition wholly natural, if not inevitable. While old sanctions are being discarded, the new values which displace them have not emerged with the full imperative force of religious consciousness behind them. Such is the situation which confronts modern Protestantism. It is no proof that religious consciousness is waning because certain loyalties are weakening. The fact that men are keenly sensitive to the situation as it is, manifesting no little uneasiness over possible developments and giving the best of their thought and devotion to the problems involved, is evidence enough that it is not dead. Present indications lead the writer to believe that there is already emerging out of the present welter of disturbing, unassimilated facts and conflicting opinions a new set of social and ethical values which once fully grasped and firmly established, will possess sufficient power to command men's loyalty and to stimulate their devotion.

Chapter Six

IN SEARCH OF HUMAN VALUES

THE preceding chapter ended with the suggestion that the welter of confused thinking and uncertain faith, characteristic of present-day American Protestantism, may signify that a new spirit is forcing its way through the hard crust of long-established customs and accepted values. Desuetude is often taken as evidence of death, whereas it may mean nothing more than what annually takes place when old foliage gives place to the new buds and blossoms. Just as falling leaves are no indication that the tree is dead, so the passing of old sanctions and values may not be a sign of waning vitality but a phase of that preparatory process by which life makes ready for a new expression.

The new spirit already abroad is at once critical and destructive and it has caused upheavals everywhere. No institution, custom, convention, or standard, has escaped its scrutiny. It challenges whatever it questions to justify its existence by reasonable service, not to the privileged minority, but to humanity as a whole. After mentioning certain deplorable conditions in India, Aldous Huxley, in his *Jesting Pilate,* writes, "And yet, in spite of everything, the

spirit of humanitarianism works even through these reluctant agents. For the spirit of humanitarianism is the spirit of the age, which it is impossible for any man, born with the usual supply of social instinct and suggestibility, completely to ignore. His reason may tell him that his own personal advantage would be best served if he kept the disinherited in their places. But a stronger force than reason is forever trying to make him act against reason. To be utterly ruthless towards the disinherited would be profitable; but he can never bring himself to be utterly ruthless. In spite of himself, he feels that he ought to give them justice. And he gives it—not very often, no doubt, and not very much at a time—but still, he gives it; that is the queer, significant and modern thing."[1]

This is the spirit that is touching and disturbing every phase of modern life and summoning it before the judgment of reality. Conditions which a few generations ago failed to disturb the finest souls now make the ordinary modern man uneasy. Exploitation, oppression, ignorance, abject poverty, war, physical suffering, all of which left the saints of bygone days unperturbed, agitate our own generation and demand the removal of these intolerable handicaps.

The history of modern education is a startling commentary on the present tendency to stress the

[1] Pages 33, 34.

value and sacredness of human life. What time and labor have been devoted to psychology, with its endless experiments, in an attempt to adapt education to the needs of evolving child life! The age is determined that education shall discover the child's potentialities for the sake of its liberation and growth. The same is true of the curricula in our colleges and universities. Through centuries the old classical languages persisted among the indispensables of higher education. A knowledge of these was universally accepted as a mark of genuine culture. Our age regards them as superfluous, or at best as optional subjects of study. We do not here question the wisdom of this innovation but rather refer to it as one of the educational trends of our times. The modern primary requirement of education is that it should equip the rising generation to meet the problems of daily living. Whether the new education is destined to accomplish this task better than the old remains to be seen. The point of greatest interest is the significance of the demand that has produced the change. The age has decreed that men shall no longer be the slaves of educational traditions and customs. Education must adapt itself to the changing needs of the times.

This new educational emphasis also requires that every child shall receive a certain amount of instruction and mental training and that the age limit of compulsory school attendance shall be raised. This

insistence promises to abolish child labor, as has already been done in many states and countries. The new demand even takes us beyond the realm of education into the spheres of industry and economics. The child's pittance is not only drawn from the family budget, but the father must provide for the needs of his growing child through those additional years of compulsory education.

In addition to the loss of cheap labor sustained by the prohibition of child employment, employers are confronted by a type of employee whose demands are greater, men who are better qualified to press their claims than were workers in previous generations. Industry, like education, is called upon to adapt itself to the demands of life, and the task involves far-reaching complications. To what extent, for example, shall government protect and regulate industry? No sooner is the question raised than a multitude of intricate subjects call for consideration. Tariffs, free competition, collective bargaining, taxes, strikes, and lockouts are among the perplexing problems which the new emphasis on the supremacy of life presses upon modern governments for satisfactory solutions. How unlike previous centuries when the toiler was wholly at the mercy of those employing him! Human life was treated as the cheapest commodity upon the market, for government existed to protect its privileged classes, regardless of the claims of the toiling masses. All this the newer con-

sciousness is rapidly changing. It may be safely assumed that the recent gains of labor mark a permanent advance in the status of the working classes. Temporary recessions there may be in certain quarters. There is no reason to believe, however, that the advantages gained will eventually be followed by a descent to previously known levels. Labor's elevation denotes a new stage in the evolutionary process—an experience which will become firmly embedded in the race's social consciousness and still make for further progress in accord with social justice.

Indeed, this labor movement might well be regarded as one of the most epoch-making achievements of our age. The gains made and labor's self-assertiveness are prophetic of its future rôle on the stage of world affairs. Its effect on Western politics and institutions is already too pronounced to be ignored by the student of social science and political history. It is of more than local significance, involving as it does matters of international moment. Nor is the solidarity of the human race anywhere more in evidence than at those points where it touches modern commerce and finance. The highly industrialized nation is dependent on world markets for its prosperity and well-being. In its competition with other nations it must reckon with certain definite factors. Among these is the question of labor conditions. The American manufacturer can-

not, any more than the American laborer, hope to compete with Chinese labor, for instance, with its lower demands due to a lower standard of living. Advantages gained in such competition must result from better mechanical equipment and greater mass production. The natural resources at a nation's command likewise prove an advantage, doubly so if it possesses the capital to utilize the raw material which nature has placed at its disposal.

It is precisely here that capital assumes international importance. Lacking the necessary currency to develop their resources, nations are driven to seek financial aid abroad. Not infrequently certain concessions are granted foreign financiers, which open the way of free access to a nation's undeveloped resources. How much of the friction and warfare of modern times can be traced to this source! Moreover, to what extent shall governments protect their citizens against the importation of low-priced goods made possible because of production at lower labor standards, larger mass production, or by a greater quantity or quality of raw materials at the disposal of their competitors? In these particulars, too, evidence of the new evolving social consciousness is not wanting. Until recent years governments favored their privileged sons in the handling of these and similar matters, while the interests of the masses were conspicuously neglected. The continuance of such a policy will not be without vigorous protest,

of a kind unheard of by earlier generations. The monopoly of natural resources, the exploitation of backward races, often to the detriment of the laboring class, protective tariffs which protected a few manufacturers and financiers at the expense of the multitudes, were so many ways by which governments served a privileged minority to the willful neglect of their teeming populations. And this apart from the wars which privilege and protection unceasingly produced, waged in the interests of the favored few and paid for in sacrifice and bloody service by those least benefited.

The new evolving consciousness is further questioning with critical, menacing gestures many things long embedded in the social order. The masses are no longer tractable, tacitly accepting the mandates of authority. Life today is being emphasized as the supremest of values, and the demand is that all institutions shall be subservient to its paramount claims. Indeed, life is more than meat, the body than raiment; and personality is more than private property, dividends, rents, interests, factories, mines or governments. Every human being, therefore, shall be treated not as a means to another's ends, but as a person whose aspirations toward self-realization must be recognized and respected. We need to realize that industrial agitation does not end in a demand for better wages and a shorter working week; it is an agitation for greater self-determination

and a fuller manhood. Nor is the newer consciousness restricted to any one class or locality. Perhaps the surest test of a civilization's status is the degree of humanitarianism expressed by its laws and institutions. If this be true, evidence provides assurance that the world is gradually growing more civilized. The trend of modern legislatures in all enlightened lands testifies to a wholesome attempt to redress existing wrongs and to mitigate human suffering. The statutes of modern states abound with testimony to the priority rights of life. Where these rights have been persistently disregarded, those in power have in several recent, impressive instances been compelled to abdicate. Despotic rulership has been displaced by more democratic forms of government, promising better protection and more favorable consideration for the nation's masses. These changes are, moreover, not restricted to matters of purely national concern. Modern humanitarianism is expressing itself in sentiments which defy national boundaries. War and the heartless exploitation of backward races are being denounced with a seriousness and vigor peculiar to our own age. International understanding and coöperation, which seek to do justice to weaker peoples, represent a phase of the newer consciousness, unknown to previous generations when economic advantage was the one guiding principle of internationalism. In a myriad ways, and in as many directions, this "queer, significant

and modern thing" is seeking expression and forcing its will upon the race.

But what has all this to do with modern American Protestantism? The same consciousness that is critically scrutinizing the secular institutions and conventions of our times has not allowed to go unquestioned what the church has long held and taught as sacred. Jesus' explosive utterance, "the sabbath was made for man and not man for the sabbath," eloquently voices the modern temper toward things "sacred." Considerable criticism was evoked a few years ago when the London City Council announced that recreations would be permitted in the city's parks on Sundays, as on any other day of the week. Many of the protests against this decision were based on the sacredness of the day, rather than on the advantages or disadvantages that might accrue from the practice. It was reasoned that the Sabbath was a holy day which called for quiet, rest, and worship. Besides, there was the probability that if this institution was set at naught, the church would likewise suffer by the innovation. Such reasoning admirably serves to bring into bold relief the modern attitude toward institutions and customs long enunciated by the church as "sacred." It may not be that the masses have ceased to believe in a day of rest and worship. It is simply that the incentive for obedience has changed. Men are insisting today that loyalty to an institution depends upon the

service it renders. Only to the degree that Sabbath-keeping justifies itself in a higher quality of life will its customs be preserved and reverence and obedience to it be sustained. To remind men of the fourth commandment and the retribution that will be meted out to Sabbath-breakers on the Day of Judgment is no longer enough to insure obedience.

The same attitude is assumed toward the "sacredness" of other Scriptural institutions. Each is tested by the criterion of service. Only in so far as it bids fair to protect and advance the best interests of life are men inclined to take it seriously. For instance, the fifth commandment, "Honor thy father and thy mother," has succumbed to the sacredness of child life. The parent can no longer claim unrestricted and unrestrained control over his children nor demand unqualified obedience to his authority and rule. Society reserves for itself the right of guardianship. Only so long as the parent faithfully fulfills the obligations of parenthood will society entrust the child to his care. The authority and sacredness of the fifth commandment have been superseded by the priority rights of the child to protection and normal development. It would be a simple matter to supply an indefinite number of similar examples illustrative of the modern attitude toward the Bible's mandates. Whatever claims may be made for a literal acceptance of the Bible's teachings, no one accepts it literally in its myriad details. A thou-

sand and one injunctions are ignored; and woe betide the person who obeyed some of them. Man was not made for the Bible, any more than he was made for the Sabbath; and the newer consciousness refuses to be enslaved by those teachings which, while perhaps possessing merit when they were originally uttered, possess neither point nor value for our own age living under Western conditions. Take, for example, Jesus' injunction about his followers washing one another's feet, even as he had taken a towel and basin of water and washed the disciples' feet. Whatever merit the practice may possess in lands where sandled feet are exposed to excessive heat and dust, the mandate is pointless when applied to Christians in the modern city of the Western world. The same applies to Paul's injunctions about women keeping silent in the church and slaves obeying their masters. Whatever social value conformity to these injunctions may have had for an age that appraised women as the private property of man and that accepted the existing social strata as ordained by an all-wise Providence—

"The rich man in his castle,
The poor man at the gate,
God made them high and lowly
And ordered their estate" [2]

[2] Quoted by A. Edward Newton, *The Greatest Book in the World*, p. 264.

—a conception which inflicted docility and dumb submission on the disinherited—such teaching no longer carries weight and authority. When we turn to the laws and conceptions of the Old Testament, obedience in numerous instances is rendered even more incongruous and impossible. It is not that the Bible has ceased to have value for the race or that men are no longer willing to conform to its finest ethical teachings. It is simply that men are no longer willing to exercise an obedience that they are convinced is unreasonable, valueless, or disadvantageous. Once men are convinced that compliance will prove beneficial to their own lives and the life of the race, its instructions will command their respect.

In this connection it is of more than passing interest to note that the character and teachings of Jesus are undoubtedly held in greater esteem today than ever before. Even those whose bitterest tirades are hurled against the claims advanced for a sacred and infallible Bible, manifest no unwillingness to accept the character and principles of Jesus for the guidance and regulation of human behavior. Everywhere there is evidence of a growing inclination to measure and test conduct, both private and collective, by what Jesus was and taught. Men are increasingly willing to accept his doctrine of love, with its fundamental laws of the Sermon of the Mount, as the clue to the secret of harmonious living and relationships. In short, the Bible possesses significance for the newer

consciousness only as it is a specific aid to the art of living. Its value is determined by the pragmatic test of serviceableness and not by the dogmatic test of traditional estimates.

The same holds true of those other institutions and customs held sacred by the church. For instance, the church has for centuries held marriage to be inviolably sacred. It claims the right to dictate the conditions under which marriage shall be legally contracted, and it has not only discouraged but has also discountenanced divorce, except under rare, extenuating circumstances. Particularly has this been true of the Roman Catholic and Protestant Episcopal churches. But the masses are increasingly disinclined to conform to the church's ruling regarding the conditions under which marriage shall be legalized or its ties broken. The rank and file no longer believe that marriages are made in heaven; that God sanctions only such marriages as are confirmed by the church; that divorce, other than the church allows, incurs divine displeasure. It is not that men have ceased to believe in the sacredness of marriage. They refuse, however, to abide by the decisions of an institution purely because of its claims to inherent sacredness. The modern tendency is to sever the tie of marriage the moment it ceases to contribute to the happiness and well-being of those involved. Once again life reserves for itself priority rights over the man-made institutions of society.

Nor is the modern attitude restricted to any one sacrament or phase of the church's life. The authority of the church for this age does not rest on its claims to divine origin, the validity of its commission as the representative of Christ on earth, and the unbroken historic succession of its priesthood. These assumptions and presumptions carry light weight with America's intelligent masses. The only authority the church can lay claim to today is the authority of service. "Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."[3] That is the test to which modern institutions, including the church, are being subjected. Any other basis is both artificial and dangerous in the light of the newer consciousness. According to its standards the seven deadly sins of the age, to quote Canon Donaldson, are: Politics without principles; wealth without work; pleasure without conscience; knowledge without character; commerce without morality; science without humanity; worship without sacrifice.

In olden days people built walls around their

[3] Matthew 20: 25–28.

cities to protect themselves against invading armies. The custom still continues. When walls of stone no longer afforded the coveted protection, privilege learned to safeguard its interests by the erection of artificial, invisible walls. They exist today—tariff walls, military walls, walls of "superiority complexes," creedal walls, walls of vested interest. Nor have the motives of privilege and protection, which impelled their erection, changed with the passing of the centuries. Nowhere is the newer consciousness more in evidence than in its attacks upon the self-imposed walls of society which have made for class, sect, nation, and race divisions in behalf of the privileged élite. With strange persistency it acclaims the solidarity of the race, the commonwealth of nations, equality of opportunity, the right of every individual, regardless of race, color, or language, to the normal development of every human being, with leisure for healthy recreation and wholesome pastimes, and "government of the people, by the people, and for the people." Moreover, existing walls of privilege will prove as powerless to repulse the advances of the newer consciousness as are ancient city walls to withstand the onslaughts of modern armaments. It is only a matter of time when

"These things shall be: a loftier race
Than e'er the world hath known shall rise,

With flame of freedom in their souls
And light of knowledge in their eyes."[4]

The harbinger and guaranty of that loftier race and better day is this newer consciousness which is already making its presence universally felt in this infinite number of ways. Its promise lies in the nature and importunity of its demands. The primary emphasis of the newer consciousness is not the papacy, but the people; not rulers, but the race; not a sacred book, but a universal brotherhood; not inflexible dogmas and unreasonable doctrines, but justice and mercy; not ritual, but righteousness; not priests and paraphernalia, but the practicality of Christian principles; not party policies, but political purity; not diplomatic intrigues and national advantage, but governmental integrity and international goodwill; not creeds, but Christ; not the protected rights of the privileged, but the priority claims of life. This then is the prayer of the new day:

"When wilt Thou save the people?
O God of mercy, when?
Not kings and lords, but nations!
Not thrones and crowns, but men!
Flowers of Thy heart, O God, are they;
Let them not pass, like weeds, away—

[4] J. A. Symonds. Taken from a newspaper twenty years ago.

Their heritage a sunless day.
God save the people!"[5]

Certain questions are naturally suggested by a review of the data relative to the newer consciousness. To what extent is religious consciousness responsible for the current emphasis on life as supreme among values? The church has always attached vital importance to the individual soul. Ever since its Founder placed the highest estimate on human life by recognizing each and every unit of the race as coming under the influence of an all-inclusive, creative love, the church has displayed the deepest concern for the individual's eternal well-being. It has taught that every individual of the race was affected by Adam's transgression, even as Christ died for the sins of all. Escape from perdition, made possible by Jesus' efficacious death, was, in turn, made a matter of individual responsibility and faith. The divine drama of sin and salvation included all souls. And because the conditions of redemption were applicable to the whole race, the necessity of extending the same high value to every human being, regardless of race, color, language, or social status, was made inevitable. As children of the same Father, exposed to the same doom, redeemed by the same blood and subject to the same redemptive exactions, the church,

[5] Ebenezer Elliott, Primitive Methodist Sunday School Hymnal, page 656.

like Paul, knew, as such, neither "Greek nor Jew . . . Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free." [6] This high estimate of the individual soul has undergirded and motivates the church's two great activities—evangelism and the missionary enterprise. It placed the church under obligation to carry its message to every individual of the race, at any cost. Because of the constant danger to which the individual soul is exposed, the Christian is taught ever to be on his guard against contributing to another's doom. "Whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me," said Jesus, "it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea." [7] It was a serious matter when a man's influence and example might prove instrumental in the damnation of his neighbor's soul. On the positive side, Christians were admonished to sustain an attitude of helpfulness. They must encourage people in every good deed and neglect no opportunity to seek their salvation. In so far as these conceptions enhanced the value of the individual and fostered a concern for others, their effect has been wholesomely humanizing.

But all this had little to do with the physical conditions under which men lived. As Dr. Gerald Birney Smith points out, the whole range of religious

[6] Colossians 3:11.
[7] Matthew 18:6.

conceptions known to previous generations had to do with the supernatural. "Man's life on this earth was looked upon as a 'probation' to fit him for eternal life in an 'other' world. . . . The Bible was valued because of its supernatural origin. The significance of Jesus was sought primarily in his supernatural birth and his superhuman constitution. Man's salvation was thought to be dependent, not on the forces of this natural world, but on the efficiency of sacraments or of an experience of supernatural regeneration." [8] Man's physical sufferings were a minor matter in the light of eternal punishment. It was the soul's danger which elicited the Christian's deepest concern, and scant attention was paid to physical conditions. Modern scholarship and science, as we have already seen, have gone far toward dispelling that world which made the supernatural so real and necessary to Christians of previous generations. And with the passing of these conceptions there has been a shifting of interest. Thus the soul, as supreme among values, has ceased to command the wealth of Christian sympathy and concern once bestowed upon it. And as the supernaturalism of an earlier day gave ground to a growing appreciation of natural processes, so an individualized religion has found an outlet for its undiminished vitality in the task of human betterment.

[8] Current Christian Thinking, p. 126.

This inevitable change of emphasis is perhaps the greatest contribution which science has made to the religious life of the age. On the other hand, one is impressed by the way religious consciousness has met the challenge of science. It is not enough to assert that religious consciousness has contributed to the rise of the newer consciousness. It is probably nearer the mark to say that the humanistic trend of the times is the latest expression of an age-long religious consciousness, which has furnished abundant proofs of its innate power to adapt itself to the constantly changing conditions and conceptions incident to the evolution of the race.

Chapter Seven

A WAY OUT OF THE DILEMMA

IF THE suggestion with which the previous chapter closed is correct, that the humanistic trend of the age is the latest expression of a religious consciousness which has persisted through all changes incident to the evolution of the race, the attitude of the church to the newer consciousness is a matter of crucial importance. To ignore its presence and demands may well prove fatal to organized religion. Before attempting any appraisal of its attitude, a preliminary inquiry is necessary. To what extent does the newer consciousness reflect the essential aim and teachings of Christianity? Definiteness and clarity at this point may well serve to rid theological thinking of much of its current confusion and conflicting claims. Let it be kept clearly in mind, then, that the primary purpose of Christianity is to produce Christian personality and a Christianized world order. Of course, it is a simple matter to quibble over terms, while definition propounds a task less simple. But whatever differences of opinion would, in all probability, be evoked by any attempt to define Christian personality and a Christian world order, one thing is certain. It is widely

felt that the present status of society is far from satisfactory. Nor is it necessary to attempt an enumeration of all the factors and forces making for impoverishment, dissension, dissatisfaction, suffering, strife, and the fostering of those psychic forces which militate against the furtherance of a world condition of harmony, goodwill and peace. Embedded in consciousness is the conviction that life is not what it should be. Nor is there any doubt respecting the cause for existing conditions. Were the law of love substituted for the rule of self-determination, the realization of a Christian world order would be assured.

Turning to the Gospel narratives, the primary purpose of Christianity will be found in agreement with the principal emphasis of Jesus' teaching. For those seriously concerned with personal development and social betterment the significance of Jesus' ministry and preachments lies in his threefold application of the law of love: as a fellowship, a discipline, a program of service. (1) Jesus arrived at some very simple but fundamental conceptions regarding the universe and mankind. He thought of all phenomena as an expression of Creative Love, and this made him keenly sensitive to his kinship to all things, both animate and inanimate. The oneness of all life and the solidarity of the race enabled him to commune with God and nature and to enjoy the fellowship of his fellow men. Selfishness was the

one insuperable barrier to fellowship. "Who is my mother and who are my brethren?" he once asked, and looking on them who sat about him, he said, "Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother." [1] The profundity and purity of his own love enabled him to demonstrate the law of love through fellowship. (2) He was also possessed of the conviction that true life lay in the harmony of the individual with the Creative Love which was over all and in all. On every hand he beheld strife and the misery that accompanies it. Jesus was convinced that if ever the world was to be rid of all preventable suffering, men must learn to apply the law of love to the whole round of existence. This application still implies the strictest discipline; for the rule of love vetoes the expression of any passion or desire, or the pursuit of any interest, that is injurious to others. In his own case, he knew that a rigorous application of the law of love would, in all probability, lead to misunderstanding, the alienation of friends, the opposition of the selfish, and culminate in his crucifixion. These eventualities Jesus courageously faced. (3) Jesus' conception of all life issuing from the one Creative Love caused him to attach the same equally high value to all men regardless of their color, language, race, or

[1] Matthew 12:50.

social status. If men were degraded and dispossessed, it was due to moral insensibility and positive selfishness. He knew that a keen sense of human dignity and divine worth, and the glorious destiny awaiting the race, once men had learned to apply the law of love to the whole range of their activities, would go far toward human emancipation. Consequently, he not merely preached to men those fundamental principles of love which would lead to human fulfillment; he also demonstrated the law of love through a life spent in the service of others. He went about doing good, making friends of publicans and sinners, seeking the lost, the least, and the last, and proving himself the great physician of sick souls. It was such a program of disinterested service, which ignored all superficial differences and self-imposed, suicidal distinctions, inspiring men with a sense of their dignity and divine worth, by which Jesus sought to teach his fellow countrymen the secret of harmonious living. That Jesus should meet with opposition in the execution of such a program was natural; his way of life struck at those gains acquired at the expense of others. Being one against many, the outcome was evident. He must either keep silent or be silenced. Must love seek to save itself by cowardly retreat, or must it vindicate its genuineness by submitting to cruel crucifixion? Calvary was inescapable if the law of love was to be convincingly demonstrated.

Once dissociated from all creedal assumptions and philosophic assertions, with their endless discussions of evil, the conditional nature of moral imperatives, the play of hereditary strains and psychic forces, redemptive schemes and theories of a future life, it is patent that the purpose of intrinsic religion and Jesus' principle of love as the law of life's fulfillment are at one with the spirit and demands of the newer consciousness. Injustice, oppression, and war, in its narrowest and mildest, as well as its widest and most brutal forms, have their roots in selfishness. Not merely the mitigation, but the elimination of the causes of all preventable suffering is the ultimate objective of modern humanitarianism. It aims to strike at all arbitrary power which is largely responsible for keeping men unenlightened and enslaved. In doing this it is but pressing the issue of Christian living on our so-called Christian civilization. The law of love is the law of life, while selfishness leads to strife and death—this epitomizes Jesus' message and ministry and states succinctly the one guiding principle of modern religious consciousness. Justice, peace and concord, the ultimate goal of the modern social urge, will not be known in any universal sense until the rule of self-determination has been displaced by the law of love. And should the newer consciousness succeed in its fight with selfishness for the recognition and application

of these principles of the Nazarene, its final victory will be no more than the consummation of the primary purpose of the Christian religion—Christian personality and a Christian world order.

To what degree has the church sensed the significance and nature of the spirit that is forcing its way through the hard crust of established customs and accepted values—a spirit often regarded as inimical to both religion and society? To what extent has the church come to associate the newer consciousness with the primary aim of Christianity and the pivotal principle of Jesus' teaching? Is it in any way seeking to order its life and to adapt its message to the urge and aspiration of the age? If modern humanism is the latest expression of an age-long religious consciousness, the aim of which is in accord with Christ's principle of love as the law of life's fulfillment and the primary purpose of the Christian evangel, it is of crucial importance to the future of the church whether it opposes, ignores, or definitely aligns itself, by preaching and practice, with the new spirit and force in the ordering of all its activities.

The church has still much to offer the age by way of fellowship. Even as Jesus found a wealth of encouragement and strength through the communion made possible by his conception of the oneness of life, the church continues to encourage and

stimulate communion with the Reality that lies behind all phenomena. It teaches men to find in fellowship the source of Christian hope, fortitude, and service. In so doing it is making no unworthy contribution to the life of the age. "Modern science, as soon as its achievements and methods are intelligently and honestly applied to the amelioration of human life in the world, will no doubt remove many existing obstacles to human fulfillment. Aspiring and enlightened human beings will to an increasing extent and probably with increasing success spend their energy in removing these obstacles and will find a large part of their fulfillment in this kind of service. No matter how successful good works may be, they are only a preparation, a necessary preparation to be sure, for the consummate life. Religion itself as a matter of living has been and will be something different. It will consist of a passion for human regeneration, which the faithful will always need to test in experience but which experience can never entirely vindicate, and which is expressed in exercises of prayer, in worship and in intensity and continuity of worship." [2] Humanitarianism can never be made a successful substitute for religion. It does not follow that, because their aims are similar, their followers are drawing on the same resources for inspiration and strength. It is perhaps

[2] *The New Republic,* June 21, 1922, p. 101.

precisely here that the church has its best opportunity to serve the newer consciousness. Humanitarianism needs the steady vision and indomitable faith which religion is able to inspire, if it is to be saved from cynicism and despair and the paralysis which these engender, as well as from many false and futile expressions.

In a deep sense religion is primarily neither a creed nor a program of life, but a vital inner experience. The vision and faith born out of that experience mold the creed and determine the program. Jesus' attitude toward the evils of life may serve to illustrate the point. His first concern was with inner purity. External conditions would right themselves once the human heart was cleansed of all selfishness and impassioned by a vision of service. In Jesus' case, he found fellowship the surest means for keeping pure his desires and motives, for keeping his life's purpose steadily before him, and for safeguarding his faith in the ultimate success of that purpose. It is not enough to work for some "far-off divine event to which the whole creation moves." There are seasons when the heart is beset by overwhelming disappointments, discouragements, and sinister misgivings. It is then that the fellowship and faith of a virile religious experience counteract the poisonous attacks of paralyzing doubt and insidious cynicism, and inspire confidence, fortitude,

and courage. It is then that to share Jesus' attitude toward life, sorrow, and the future, which is the Christian attitude, is of first importance and matters more than anything else in the world. It is not only the renowned mystic who has found fellowship with the Unseen Companion a source of unlimited strength. There are innumerable examples on record of keen intelligences, coolly engaged in practical affairs, who find in communion with the Invisible the meaning of life's riddle and the secret of human endeavor. One thinks of a Socrates, a Gladstone, a Beatrice Webb, among scores of others, who found in the mystic vision of religious experience the purpose and power of their individual efforts. By its encouragement and stimulation of a communion with the Creative Love which sustains all life, the church is rendering the age a definitely acceptable service.

It is perhaps in its application of the law of love as a discipline and program of service that the church discloses its greatest weakness and finds itself most at variance with the spirit of the age. Alas, religion is too often a matter of experience and little more. Jesus, the Founder of the Christian religion, did not accept his inner experience as an end in itself. Out of the depth of his experience there flowed a dynamic force equal to the execution of his life's purpose. He taught that inner experience must be

translated into consecrated effort if it is to prove beneficial to anyone other than the one by whom it is felt. To follow Jesus' way of life involves stern discipline, and discipline in turn exacts, among other things, patience, endurance, sacrifice, and, not infrequently, suffering. There's the rub. The average human being is prone to yield to inertia, ease, and the pull of the pleasurable. Equal to the demands of necessity and external pressure, he is seldom able to sustain long a régime of discipline that is self-imposed. The world lacks not idealism but soul discipline. Men are unwilling to pay the price of denial involved in the application of known principles and ideals. For too many Christians religion is an adoration, a devotional exercise, an ecstasy, a blind submission, rather than a rule of conduct, a passionate persuasion. Were the same stern discipline applied to daily conduct, as is undertaken before physical culture is possible, there would be less disparity between Christian profession and practice.

The Christian principle of love as a discipline and program of service is perhaps seen in its worst light in the social attitudes of our Christian civilization. Ernest Pontifex is said to have once remarked of his father's parishioners that they would have been equally surprised to hear anyone doubt or see anyone practice Christianity. The claims of love cut across all self-interests. Consequently, its

application involves exactions which few are willing to meet. The great need of the hour is not finer ideals; the need is men who can put their ideals into life even though it means submergence of personal interests. If all life is to be held sacred and treated as of equal divine worth; if a world condition of justice, harmony, and plenty for all is to be known, considerable curbing of personal desire must be practiced. The urge of the newer consciousness leaves no room for doubt regarding its attitude toward these truths. It is pledged to the task of their translation into universally experienced facts. Is the church's cardinal message equally clear and pronounced?

An earlier chapter took note of some of the indictments brought against the modern church. It is perhaps enough to add that the church will have to manifest keener sympathy with the aspirations of the disinherited than it has thus far done if it is to appeal effectively to the unattached masses. Apathy and defection are no indication of antagonism to Jesus' philosophy of life. There are, undoubtedly, more people interested in the ideals of Jesus than ever before, but it is felt by many that his creed and his commandment of love are buried beneath a mass of confessions of faith of a most controversial nature. The church has, beyond doubt, lost no little prestige in the eyes of an age keenly sensitive to the social urge by its absorption in unessen-

tials to the neglect of the one thing that really matters—"love to the uttermost limit." If this law is to be accepted as the rule of life and conduct, genuine surrenders must necessarily be made. The church will need to recognize in the establishment of a Christian world order a bigger and more vital thing than sectarian prosperity and expansion or the winning of general acceptance of its most cherished dogmas. Men may well inquire what would happen were the denominations willing to change or discard any practice if thereby they might further life's fulfillment. And yet such is the virtual implication of Jesus' condition of discipleship: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." [3]

Liberal Christianity holds no brief for many of the doctrines of sectarianism. They have rather been dismissed as minor matters of little intrinsic value. And, because of sectarian dogmatism, liberal Christians tolerate each other's differences of viewpoints and beliefs. But they have fallen victims to the same fallacy which they so readily condemn in sectarianism; they are inclined to stress their differences rather than their agreements. It is this that has made for confusion and impotency in the presentation of liberal Christianity to the world. If Modernism is ever to convince the mass of Protestant

[3] Matthew 16:24.

Christians of the validity and vigor of its message, it must learn the value and necessity of finding a common denominator of faith, that will enable it to confront the age with an evangel of definite certitudes that crystallizes its selfless aspirations. In the absence of all agreement of what is essential to personal and world redemption, the church is exposed to a disorder that may well prove self-destructive. It is not a question of whether Fundamentalists or Liberals will triumph in the present struggle. There is danger that both may be reduced to impotency through the indifference to all Christian appeal, generated by the inability of Christians to agree on what constitutes the essentials of their faith and message. The very presence of sectarianism testifies to the considerable differences which still divide the Protestant church. In the meantime, the chief victim of the struggle is religion itself as a way of life. What is this common denominator into which all minor related beliefs are convertible? It is Jesus' rule of love as the law of life in its threefold application—as a fellowship, a discipline, a program of service. It is sufficiently broad and inclusive to meet all the requirements of religious thinking, needs, and fulfillment. Is it too much to ask the church to restrict itself to this tenet of faith? —"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind,

and with all thy strength . . . and thy neighbour as thyself." [4]

"Here is the truth in a little creed,
Enough for all the roads we go;
In love is all the law we need,
In Christ is the only God we know." [5]

Such a course has several obvious advantages. The church would allow for the greatest possible differences of theological opinion without exposing it to incessant internal conflicts. Doctrines would not be insisted upon as facts to be accepted but as hypotheses, and as such to be held. It would remove the one barrier now debarring entrance into the church's fellowship to those whose sense of honesty will not allow them to subscribe to creeds which they do not believe. As the church directs its message and energies to the exclusive task of permeating society with the spirit and principles of its Master, doctrinal differences, ecclesiastical disagreements, and sectarian divisions would correspondingly tend to lessen. It is also safe to assume that multitudes now standing aloof from organized religion would be more inclined to listen to the church's voice, once convinced that its chief mission and purpose is to

[4] Mark 12:30, 31.

[5] From "Quatrain," by Edwin Markham, in Clark & Gillespie's *Quotable Poems*, p. 77.

force the issue of the application of Jesus' principle of love to every phase of human endeavor and relationship.

Whatever theories may be held respecting the significance of Jesus' death, men will never exhaust the whole meaning of Calvary or wholly dispel its infinite mystery. The one thing certain is that Calvary clearly discloses that personal and race redemption and the stability of society can only come by way of sacrifice and self-denial. The social system endures because of the daily surrender of the individual to the larger social self. Surely men may be left to arrive at their own estimate of Jesus, whether he was God, man, a mixture of both, or distinct from either. It should suffice if they recognize his law of love as essential to social well-being and the further advancement of the race. In the light of this gospel all things assume their rightful proportions. Sacraments and external authorities would have value only as they contribute to the development of Christian personality and a Christian world order. The significance of the Lord's Supper, for instance, does not depend on our views of transubstantiation or consubstantiation. It is when the emphasis is placed on "Do this in remembrance of me" that its importance stands revealed. "In remembrance of me!"—not some particular incident in Jesus' career, but his whole life's program which so

forcefully enunciated the law of love. To remember, however, is not enough. The love it commemorates must find lodgment in the heart of the participant, fructifying in more Christlike living. This is the test by which all authority is to be appraised, whether that of the church or the Bible or anything else that bears on character and conduct. Indeed, this law of love is the one authority to which all lesser authorities must yield. Any authority the church may claim for itself is doomed to ineffectiveness if incompatible with the law of love or if it fail to further the evolution of a world order of love.

It is now some years since Benjamin Kidd sought to prove that man had, centuries ago, reached the limit of his physical and mental development, and that whatever evolution he has known through modern times, or will know in the centuries to come, has been, and will be, in the direction of a slowly evolving social consciousness. The facts of the hour seem to verify Mr. Kidd's thesis. Our own age is in the grip of a social consciousness that is gaining strength and growing more exacting and assertive with the passing of each decade. The contention of this closing chapter is that the emphasis of this newer consciousness—the sacredness of all life—is at one with the essence of Christianity. It not only accords with the aim and goal of religion—Christian personality and a Christian world order—but finds its greatest justification in Jesus' principle and teaching

of love as the law of life. Unless the church seriously strives to apply Jesus' law of love as a fellowship, a discipline, a program of service in the ordering of its life, its future is far from assured. Therein lies the dilemma of Protestantism.

There never was a time when the world, especially youth, had greater need of Christ's spirit and teaching. Far from having completed its task, the church should enter upon a renewed ministry. What we mistake as evidence of a dying religion is simply the passing of complacent Christianity. Men are still interested in intrinsic religion, groping blindly through the mists of current uncertainty for a rediscovery of Jesus and essential Christianity. Once religion has again become intimately attached to the everyday affairs of life and is believed to possess vital significance, men will heed its appeal. Once the church focuses every ounce of its energy on the establishment of Christ's law of love throughout the world, there is every reason to believe that its voice will again be listened to, its leadership acknowledged, its challenge prove sufficiently virile to critical but adventurous youth, and its claim upon the loyalty and devotion of the unattached accepted by them.

"A mightier church shall come whose covenant word
Shall be the needs of Love. Not Credo then—

Amo shall be the password through the gates.
Man shall not ask his brother any more,
'Believest thou?' but 'Lovest thou?' and all,
And all shall answer at God's altar, 'Lord, I love.'
For Hope may anchor, Faith may steer, but Love,
Great Love alone, is captain of the soul." [6]

[6] From "A Mightier Church," by Henry B. Carpenter, in Clark & Gillespie's *Quotable Poems*, p. 138.

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